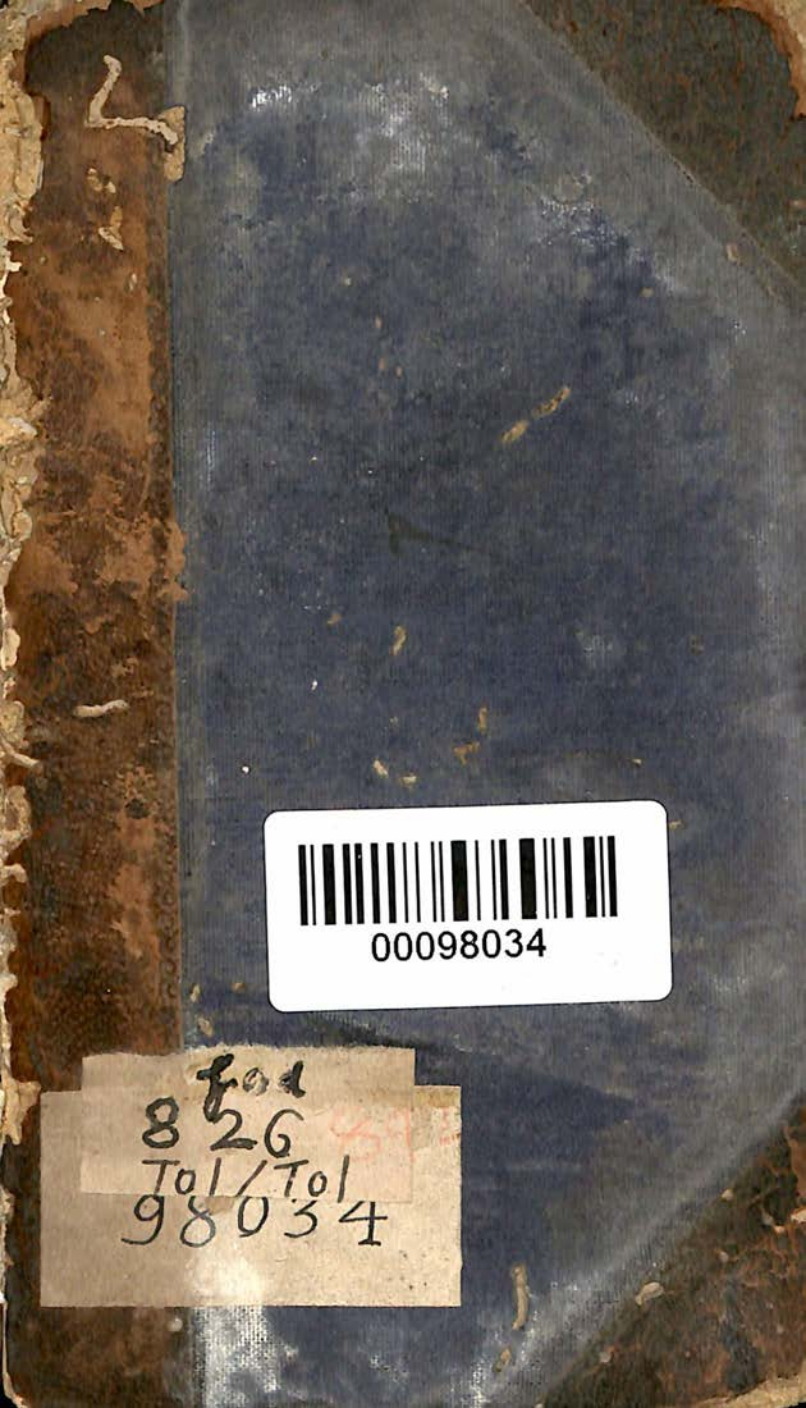
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THE

TALE

OF

A MODERN GENIUS;

OR,

THE MISERIES OF PARNASSUS.

IN A SERIES OF LETTERS.

"His was indeed such wayward doom
As seldom 'gainst man's sins is hurled;
His horoscope was dashed with gloom,
His cloud came with him to the world
And clipped him round, and weighed him down,
A deep, revokeless malison!"

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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THE

TALE OF A MODERN GENIUS;

OR,

THE MISERIES OF PARNASSUS.

LETTER XLVI.

" O Genius! fling aside thy starry crown,
Close up thy rainbow wings, and on thy head
Lay dust and ashes,—for this cold drear world
Is but thy prison house. Alas! for him
Who has thy dangerous gifts; for they are like
The fatal ones that evil spirits give,
Bright and bewildering, leading unto death!
O, not amid the chill and earthly cares
That wait on life, may those fine feelings live
That are the Poet's and the Painter's light."

Cawsand.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

EMBARKING at Malta with the Irish captain, a fair and speedy voyage once more restored me to the British shores. Not a sight of the distant mountains of Spain, that land of chivalry and wild romance, could awaken in my bosom half that delight which the view of the remote cliffs of my native island inspired, as I stood on the

vessel's deck eagerly watching their slow emersion from the vast Atlantic on the blue edge of the far-off horizon.

Shortly after my landing at Plymouth, I learnt that a company of comedians were performing at Cawsand with very considerable success, and I immediately set off to join them. But what was my surprise at finding in the manager my old acquaintance Mac Lear, with all my quondam theatrical friends; and not only to find him here, but to find him and all his family so wonderfully improved in their wardrobe, that both on and off the boards, they appear really respectable. Ill-fortune taking her leave of them in my company, Mrs. Mac Lear failed not to improve her advantages, by procuring a new and splendid supply of theatrical gear; so that in her tragic characters, wherein she displays considerable talent, she moves and shines once more a queen.

On the afternoon of my arrival, I found the company in a grand bustle, preparing to embark for the Malta, a first-rate man-of-war, then lying with several others in Cawsand bay. A sumptuous gala was to be given on board by the captain and officers; and in the evening the play of *The Soldier's Daughter* to be represented by the Cawsand comedians. My unexpected appearance

among the performers excited much surprise, and seemingly real pleasure. I was immediately inlisted by the captain of the *corps dramatique*, and the part of Young Malford was assigned for the exhibition of my talents before the crew and numerous guests of the Malta. We assembled on the sandy shores of the bay, and the long-boat conveyed us to the side of the ship, up which a temporary staircase covered with crimson cloth was erected for the company to ascend to the quarter-deck. We were received by some of the officers with great politeness, and conducted to a private cabin, where we were regaled with various refreshments, and drank full bumpers of wine.

After being shown every thing worthy observation in this amazingly capacious floating castle, we returned to the deck, and beheld the various preparations for the grand fête. The whole was nearly covered with an awning formed of numerous coloured flags of many different nations. A gallery was fitted up at one end, and opposite to it a temporary stage; here was displayed nearly all Mac Lear's scenery, which through the late accession of his brother-in-law, who is a tolerable painter, could boast of several changes. Festoons of flowers and evergreens ornamented the sides of this vast hall, which was nearly the whole length

of the ship; the masts were bound with garlands like the village may-pole, and fragrant wreaths, composed of the pride of the fields and gardens, were disposed at proper distances to enliven the festive scene.

"This was a day of banquetting on board,
And swan-winged barks and barges many-oar'd
Came crowded to the feast: the young, the gay,
The beautiful, were there. Right merrily
The pleasure-boats glide onward,—with swift prow
The clear wave curling; till around each bow,
With frequent flash, the bright and feathery spray
Threw mimic rainbows at the sun, in play,—
The ship is won, the silken chair is lowered,
Exulting youth and beauty bound on board.
Young Pleasure kissed each heart: from Persia's loom
An ample awning spread its purple bloom
To canopy the guests; and vases, wreathed
With deep-hued flowers and foliage, sweetly breath'd
Their incense, fresh as zephyrs when they rove
Among the blossoms of a citron grove:
Soft sounds (invisible spirits on the wing)
Were heard and felt around them hovering:
In short, some magic seem'd to sway the hour,
The wand-struck deck becomes an orient bower,
A very wilderness of blushing roses,
Just such as Love would choose when he reposes.
The pendent orange from a bush of leaves
Hangs like Hesperian gold; and, tied in sheaves,

Carnations prop their triple coronels:
The grape, out-peeping from thick foliage, falls
Like cluster'd amethysts in deep festoons;
And shells are scatter'd round, which Indian moons
Had sheeted with the silver of their beams:
But O, what more than all the scene beseems,
Fair, faultless forms glide there with wing-like motion,
Bright as young Peris rising from the ocean!"

A crowd of officers in their splendid uniforms, and numerous other gentlemen in full dress were present, with nearly all the females of rank and fashion in Plymouth and its vicinity. Two bands were stationed on the upper part of the gallery, the remainder of which was occupied by the crew of the ship. Music rung o'er the deep in loud and melodious strains; while the waves seemed charmed to perfect tranquillity with the magic of its rapturous voice. Beauty, with her cheek of rose and star-bright eye, now smilingly joined hands with manly valour in the labyrinthian mazes of the joy-inspiring dance, and all was gaiety, laughter, splendour, and happiness.

Music! how powerful are the emotions thou awakenest in my soul! I cannot hear thy majestic tones suddenly fill the air with harmony,—recalling days and scenes past for ever away, like the dreams of night,—and restrain the flood-gates

of sensibility from overflowing, or repress the long-drawn sigh of pleasing melancholy: and though my late disappointments seemed all forgot, and my sorrows lost in the gay tumult of this magnificent *fête champêtre*, yet, as I looked around the happy multitude whose "wreathed smiles" heightened the soft enchantments of beauty, and where all eyes shed the brilliant light of care-forgetting joy, a painful feeling, despite of my attempts to check it, obtruded on my heaving bosom. Pass a few months, at most a few years, and where will then be all this jocund assembly, proud in personal accomplishments, in youth, and fame-achieving valour? Far distant shall we soon be sundered, and how different will be our fate in life! We shall never meet again! Gay as the insects that sportively float in the summer sun's declining beams, we now swim along the merry dance to the sprightly sound of pipe and string; but the storms of life will quickly arise, the dark tempest will scatter us, and we shall be left each one to struggle with his own destiny! Valour shall sleep full low on its coral bed, distained with blood, amid the dark caverns of the howling ocean! Sorrow and age shall wither the roses on the cheek of beauty; and on the thorny pillow of sickness the premature

hand of death rob the brightest eye of its soul-subduing beams!

Coffee and other refreshments having been served round to all the company present, about eight o'clock in the evening the play began. Mrs. Mac Lear, in the sprightly widow, acquitted herself with eclât, and the whole performance gave universal satisfaction. After the dramatic entertainments were ended, the whole party sat down to a supper prepared on a most magnificent scale. The dessert was superb, ornamented with all the fruits and flowers of the season,—the bands playing the whole time. At two the dancing again commenced; and when we quitted this floating island of enchantment, the morning in all its quiet loveliness was dawning over the distant cliffs of Devon, and the sea-breezes, scarce awakened from their night slumberings, came in dimness o'er the ocean, softly dimpling the distant wave as if afraid to disturb the beautiful serenity of the twilight scene, while along the silent shores the glassy waters reposed in perfect stillness.

I remain,

Yours most truly,

SYLVATICUS.

LETTER XLVII.

Launceston.

DEAR FRANK,

WE are once more within the precincts of Cornwall's Dukedom, and at one of the chief seats of its native princes, of which I must attempt to give you some account. The town of Launceston, or the Church of the Castle as the present name implies, is seated on a pleasant eminence, one side of which forms a very steep declivity, and at its foot meanders the silvery Attery between its green and flowery banks hastening on to meet the Tamar, in whose dark bosom it softly hides itself about three miles from hence. Two of the ancient gates, the north and south, of this hill-city, once encompassed with a strong wall, are still remaining; that on the south forming the town prison. The church is a singular and handsome edifice of florid gothic, and every square block of granite with which it is composed, the chisel of the ingenious lapidary carver has curiously enriched with an endless variety of

ornaments; while the east end is adorned with a fair statue of the Magdalene.

But far above all, and most to be wondered at, stand, in naked and venerable majesty, on a lofty hill partly natural and partly artificial, the thick-ribbed remains of the ancient castle, or palace of Dunheved, proudly commanding the town and surrounding country. Here once dwelt the princes of Cornwall, in all their barbarous but regal state. It originally consisted of three circular towers or wards, one within the other; the outer wall is not more than three feet in breadth, the second twelve, and the innermost, which crowns the apex of the conical hill, ten, and its height thirty-two feet above the top of the mountain. To these were added in the Saxon and Norman times, an inner and outer ballium, barbicans, vast ditches, portcullises, embattled towers, and covered ways, with machicolations for pouring down hot sand and melted lead on the heads of a besieging foe. These additional imposing munitions covered a considerable extent of ground; and together with the British palace or keep, formed a vast and almost impregnable fortress. The grand entrance was on the north-east, through a covered way of more than a hundred feet. The front arch, which is pointed,

is now considerably injured; the second, which is smaller and quite round, opens into the area, or outer court of the castle. To the south, their is another ruined entrance; and in the north angle stands a tower called the witches' tower. But the grand citadel, the parapet of which is more than a hundred feet above the court, still retains its primeval form, and is a rugged, but sublime monument of ancient British magnificence and strength. The ascent to this lofty palace was by a long flight of covered steps seven feet wide, now in ruins, which commenced in a semi-circular tower at the south-west corner of the court. The inner tower, which contained the royal apartments, is about eighteen feet in diameter, and seem to have been divided into two rooms. Above these was another floor, which was the regal hall of state, in which are large openings to the east and west that once served to give light to this lofty wine-chamber, and commanded a most extensive prospect over the surrounding country. There is still a spiral staircase near the entrance of the central ward, by which the watchmen went up to the topmost battlements of the inner tower to mark the approach of hostile armies, and guard their royal master against the dangers of warlike surreption.

This truly venerable pile, I believe with that most able and judicious antiquarian, King, to have been erected by the Indigenæ of Cornwall, according to those instructions for defensive munitions in war received by them in their earliest dawn of civilization from the Phœnicians, with whom they traded, as I have before observed to you in a former letter. It is wholly unlike any other castellated monument I have hitherto beheld, but answers exactly to the description of the palaces of many eastern kings. Herodotus says, lib. 1. 98. that the Medes built Dejoces, warlike and magnificent edifices of different coloured walls, one within the other; and this castle seems to have been built on the exact model of the palace of Ecbatana. In 1540 several leather coins, with the impression of a stamp visibly remaining on them, were found in the walls, which sufficiently attest its great antiquity.

Here dwelt Vortigern, chief king of the Britons, both before and after the imperial crown was set on his head by the loss of the bloody field of Arles; where Constantine, sovereign of Britain, who had assumed the purple and gained possession of Gaul and Spain, fell with the flower of British warriors, who had followed him in the hope to see their native prince march in triumph

through the streets of Rome, the master of the world.

More than a thousand years have rolled away, sweeping generation on generation with all their works into the unfathomable grave of oblivion that knows no resurrection, since King Vortigern dwelt in this tower of his strength; whilst thou, soft gliding Attery, though ever changing, still remainest the same, flowing on in thy unaltered course. Still bloom the summer flowers on thy alder-shaded banks. Still doth the morning sun awaken the birds to fill the groves of thy valley with their wonted melody; and the eternal moon silvers thy rippling waters as in the days of old, in the years of ancient times, when Vortigern loved at early dawn and evening's pensive hour to gaze on thy beauty from the chambers of his mountain palace. But he is gone, O proud Dunheved, with all thy star-clad chiefs of British line! Thy glory is departed from thee to return no more for ever! Thou sittest in nakedness and solitude bewailing thy widowhood! Thy pomp is vanished, like the splendour of the midnight meteor, and all thy beauty covered with dust! The flames of war have consumed thy lofty gates, and crumbled to ashes the strength of thy towers! The bittern and the owl have taken up their abode

in thy banquet chambers; and for the festive harmony of bardic harps, the croaking of the blood-raven is heard in thy moss-grown halls! Brambles and nettles grow up in thy palace wards; and the thorn waves its flowerless branches on the passing blast from the ragged battlements of thy mouldering walls! Thou art desolate as the tombs of Hekatompylos; deserted as the pillared ruins of Palmyra, through which the desert winds howl to the roaring of the hungry lion; for thy nobles are passed away into oblivion, and of all thy princes, none shall ever visit thee again! And where are they? With all that have been,—encircled with immensity beyond the reach of mortal thought! Where their warlike valour, the pride and safety of a nation? and where the high tale of their renown, that shed a glory o'er the harp of the enraptured minstrel? Vanished, like the dew of the morning,—faded away like the radiance of a falling star! And where repose their ashes? None can tell. The tomb hath resigned its trust, and given them to the winds; they are scattered like the chaff, and mingled with the vile things of earth! O how humiliating, how mortifying this to pomp and pride of birth! Yet how interesting is this spot. In that chamber, whose walls are

now so bare and rugged, and which echoes to the midnight shrieks of the grim spectre-witch of the tower, has King Vortigern paced to and fro in agony of soul, racked with the cares that wait upon a crown, and deeply feeling that

"Princes have but their titles for their glories,
An outward honour for an inward toil;
And, for unfelt imaginations,
They often feel a world of restless cares;
So that between their titles and low name,
There's nothing differs but the outward fame;"

dreading rival competitors for the British diadem, and well knowing the inclination of many Celtic chiefs to raise the sons of Constantine to the throne, and place the sovereign sceptre in the hands of a legitimate line; while the ferocious Caledonians, Picts, and other barbarous nations of the north, with horrid inroads cruelly murdered his subjects, and desolated the fairest provinces of his dispeopled kingdom.

Here were laid those fatal plans, which ultimately rent the British empire from the princes of her ancient blood for ever, and placed her mighty dominion in the hands of foreign hordes of pagan and blood-thirsty corsairs. Here Vortigern devised the downfal of himself and all his

race, by calling in to his aid the Saxon pirates who infested the seas and harrassed all the maritime parts of Europe; who, after long years of havoc and misery, subjugated the bravely struggling, but unfortunate inhabitants of this island, and established a perpetual empire destined to surpass in glory and power all the kingdoms of the world beside!

Pondering amid the ruins of Dunheved on these wonderful events in the history of nations, the vision of other days dawned upon my imagination, and the shadows of the mighty dead passed in dim majesty before me. I saw the mountain palace of Cornubia in all its former splendour, and heard King Vortigern, as he gloomily traversed the bannered chamber of his forefathers, thus exclaim—

This is to be a king! Could I have known
Those pangs of jealousy, those cares, and fears,
And sorrows for my country, drenched in blood
By merciless barbarians, which now rack
My restless bosom, when yon banner flung
Its golden folds above my gem-bound head
Amid the ensanguined field of Arles, and rose
The shouts of Britain's brave remaining host
Proclaiming Vortigern their island-king,
I would the glittering wreath of sovereign power,

Plucked from the blood-stained brows of Constantine
In battle fallen, have dashed upon the ground,
And bade the trump its coronation peal
Forbear to ring for me. But now that this
Refulgent circle hath my temples bound,
And I have grasped the sceptre, thrusting by
The sons of Constantine, I would not let
The soul-bewitching prize be from me torn,
And I be made a vassal.—

Enter EDULPH.

Welcome, prince of Glevum;
What tidings to Dunheved's regal tower
Dost thou bring from the north?

Edulph. Sad tidings, king
Supreme of Britain. How can I repeat
The dreadful tale? Caer Ebranc is no more:
Rome of the north, city of emperors,
And birth-place of th' immortal Constantine,
Thy glory is consumed. Bewailingly
Thou sit'st in dust and ashes; the red sword
Of fell destroying Picts and Scottish tribes
Hath widowed thee; and o'er thy palaces
The flame-sheet flings its sanguine folds to heaven;
Grim desolation's banner.

Vortigern. Thou hast told
A woful tale indeed.

Edulph. The barbarous hordes
Are pouring onward to the trembling south:
Death in their van rides on his giant steed;
And the fierce fire-fiend of destruction follows

Their blood-polluted footsteps.

Vortigern. Heavenly powers!
How shall we stay this overwhelming tide,
That threatens all our kingdom?

Edulph. Not by tears,
And sighs, and wild laments: no, we must rouse
The noble energies we yet possess,
And call them into action. 'Down these walls
No longer let thy banner idly stream,
Nor thy broad falchion rust in indolence.
Send forth thy summons through this spacious isle,
And call the British nations to the field:
Draw forth thy sword, thy battle-garments lock
In indignation on thy sinewy limbs:
Lift up th' imperial standard on these hills,
And wake the voice of war. To thee will flock
The brave Danmonii, and their bright example
Win all the nations of the south to rise,
And drive these bold invaders from our homes.
Yes, come thou forth from this thy mountain hold,
And bravely lead us onward: we will meet
Right manfully the foe, and our good swords
Shall back to Caledonia's forests push
Her ruthless mountaineers.

Enter DIVITACUS.

Divitacus. Prince of Britain,
News is arrived that on the shores of Kent
Hengist and Horsa, two famed sea-kings fierce,
Have landed with their Saxon pirate bands,
And terror spread o'er all the adjacent coast.

Vortigern. [*after a pause*] It shall be so.—Edu'ph,
I long have thought
To call these valiant Saxons to our aid
Against the northern clans. Yes, I will hence
To Troynovant's proud citadel, and there
Convoke the princely chieftains of the isle;
Send to these ocean-kings fair embassy,
And give them honourable employ. Their hands
Can handle well the instruments of death.
Unlike the soft luxurious Britons, they
Are nursed upon the iron lap of war,
Cradled in tempests, by wild billows rocked,
And daily schooled in battle's fiercest lore:
They will the Caledonian tribes repel,
And to our harrassed borders peace restore.

Edulph. Rather, eternal war will be our lot!
Shall Saxon rovers find from thee, O king,
Safeguard and friendship? Shall they in our isle,
Those bloody pagan corsairs, be carressed
And find employment? Ah! if once they set
Firmly their feet upon our hapless shores,
Too much of deadly work their swords will find.
The day that thou employ'st them to expel
The foes of Britain, seals sad Britain's doom,
And thou in them shalt find her worst of foes!

LETTER XLVIII.

Stratton.

DEAR FRANK,

AN earnest desire to interest you in my fate, has ever prompted me to communicate to you without reserve or restraint, the many vicissitudes of an eventful life; and your friendly sympathy has always served to soften the bitterness of the disappointments and mortifications I have been compelled to endure. I would now fain describe an object that affects me more nearly, that gives me greater delight to contemplate than would even the Pyramids of Egypt could I behold them in all their sacred antiquity of unknown ages, or the ruined tombs and temples of Thebes richly and mysteriously adorned with hieroglyphic mythology; for it is the master-piece of nature, the consummation and glory of the works of God: nor is it beauty, grace, and elegance in ruins; but clad in the full bloom of health and youth. She of whom I would give you a description, is the charming daughter of one of the actors of this company; and since I first beheld her, grown almost to the perfection of loveliness. Her form

is graceful, enchanting, and sylph-like. Her lips are of the coral hue, and on her cheek dwell the dewy blushes of the morning rose. Her locks are blacker than the wing of the raven, and from her full dark eye flash beams as bewitchingly bright as streamed from the hyacinthine lashes of that queen, the last of the Ptolemean line, on the upturned gaze of the agonized Roman chief, when with her love she calmed his rage for the loss of a world. Sweet Mary! I cannot paint in words the boundless passion of my heart. Thy smile throws a gleam of brightness on all my gloomy cares, like the moon enlightening the skirts of the departing storm; the soft tones of thy melodious voice soothe all my sorrows, and I hang delighted on its accents as the weary pilgrim listens to the rich organ-swell of the vesper hymn, when he has gained at eventide the monastic portal where lie enshrined the sacred relics of his saint. In thy society I forget that I have been unfortunate, and bless the hour that brought me to the sandy shores of Cawsand. This you will think, perhaps, is the rhapsody and wild romance of an infatuated lover: but believe me, Frank, she is worthy of all the praises that I can lavish on her perfections, of all that my fond heart would fain bestow on her merits.

But I am not the only one on whom the charms of Mary have made a deep impression. She has had many admirers, as you may easily believe, exposed as she of necessity is to the gaze of the public. Among others, a young officer was deeply smitten with her at Cawsand, and the other day sent her the following *billet-doux;* which being, I conceive, strictly original, I copy *verbatim et literatim* for your amusement.

"DEAREST MARY,

'Twas when the seas was Rorin and waves run mountains hi,
O ther I Lay Deplorin with Eys fixt to the sky,
to think on my Dear Mary that I must leaf Be hind,
the farest of all Creatrs, She is allys in my mind.
the first time I Beheld her, She sot my haert on fier
to be acquinted with her Twas all my Sol's desire;
to view her painted Bosom, her Brist as whit as Sno,
you'd think she was an angel to see her walk or go;
you'd think she was an angel dished up in mortl form,
for such another woman was surely never Born.
But if she Do profe Cruel, alas! I am undone;
my hart it Burns like fuel, and I Destracted run.

I Remain, my dearest
Mary, your everlasting lover
through fire and smok and blood and water
JOHN BATLETT,
second lieftenant on board the ——'

We returned to this place about five weeks ago; during that time we performed a fortnight at the little town of Clovely, situated on the shores of the Bristol channel. In the grand hall of Sir James H——, who has a handsome seat in the neighbourhood, we performed the comedy of *The Honey Moon* to an overflowing audience. Our patrons were the heir of Sir James and his amiable lady, whose urbanity and unaffected politeness render them truly noble. O, if the great ones of the earth, who look down with sovereign contempt on all whom fortune, or rather Providence, has placed beneath them in point of riches and fading honours, did but know how a kind smile, a gentle word, and a look of compassion and benignity win the hearts to an enthusiastic devotedness of the poor and the unhappy, they would surely no longer wear on their brows those disgusting frowns of supercilious pride; but learn to look on their fellow-creatures with something like human feelings, and cease to despise those who might often be their superiors in merit and real greatness, because their talents, that would otherwise shine forth like the sun, are buried in the thick clouds of misfortune and indigence.

Alas! what impenetrable clouds hang on my

dark fate! I once fondly dreamt of literary fame and distinction among the sons of genius. Vain expectation! Illusive hopes! I have no patron, no friend to guide or direct me towards the fair Land of Promise, or hold out the least encouragement to the useless productions of my despairing Muse. I spend my youthful days in ardent aspirations, in hopeless yearnings after the immortality of a renown never to be mine, like one

> Who on some dew-bespangled bank of flowers
> Lies gazing on the cloudless moon, that showers
> Around his head a flood of beauteous light,
> And fancies in her orb Elysian bowers,
> And fairylands serenely mild and bright,
> Sighing to hold companionship with those
> Who revel in her shades of cinnamon and rose.

But one pleasure I have. Mary has a taste for poetry, and loves to listen to my artless lays. We often wander about the beautiful domains of Sir James H. so richly skirted with woods and groves to the very shores of the Sabrinian sea, and commanding most delightful views. There I read to her my verses; and there we often listen, beneath some wide-spreading tree, to the dulcet strains of Sir James's ancient British harper, as he sweeps the strings in the lofty portal of the gothic hall, and casts a sweetly-soothing

spell on the romantic scenery of the valley, I send you the following lines, written on one of our evening rambles.

TO MARY.

Hear'st thou that harp, of tones so sweet,
Borne on the evening breeze,
Around each green embowered retreat
And o'er the twilight seas,
Mary?

Like Ossian's lyre it sounds to me,
By Morven's wandering rills,
As these deep woods its minstrelsey
With wild enchantment fills;
And he who wakes that pensive lay,
Like Fingal's son, nor beam of day
Nor tint of opening flower can e'er behold,
Nor summer dawn, nor evening skies of gold.
In darkness he the strings doth sweep,
Yet feels of other days the fire;
For he is of those bards that sleep
On Mona's hills beside their lyre,
Mary.

From distant shores and isles returned,
Where north winds chilled, or suns fierce burned,
The sea-boy on the star-lit deep
Enraptured lists the strain;

The harper was blind.

And thinks some bard on yon dim steep,
Woke from his thousand years of sleep,
Flings music o'er the main,
Mary.

Thou in yon hall to that wild string,
Enchantingly along
Hast danced so gay, and bade it ring
In concert with thy song:
Thy graceful dance and plaintive ditty,*
Won deep applause, and tears from Pity,
Mary.

What gives the harp such powers of sound,
Dispelling every care and grief?
What makes this heart with joy rebound,
Yielding my woes a sweet relief?
What o'er the landscape flings such witching charms
Unspeakably sweet?
O, 'tis that thou art in my arms,
And thy soft accents greet
My ears, that drink their music in;
And think it would be e'en a sin,
To lose the faintest murmuring
Of voice more sweet than turtle-doves',
Breathing at eve their simple loves,
Mary.

Wert thou not here, how dull would be
That harp's divinest melody;

* Alluding to her performance of Ophelia.

These dewy flowers, if thou wert hence,
To me would yield no redolence:
Dreary as dirge-notes o'er a grave,
Would be the song of wind and wave;
Yon eve-star dim be to my sight,
And pale the full moon's radiant light;—
But thou o'er day and night, o'er earth and sky,
The spell of beauty casts enchantingly,

Mary.

I am, my dear friend,

Yours sincerely,

SYLVATICUS.

LETTER XLIX.

Modbury, Devon.

DEAR FRANK,

IT is long since I have written to you, and as I have now much to impart, I will resume my narrative.—

"Och, thunder and turf! considering the goodness of the cause, they drop in as sparingly as mites into a poor's-box, as Mr. What-is-it says. I say, good folks, if you live a thousand years after you are dead, you'll never have such another opportunity of seeing one of the first plays written in your mother tongue performed by some of the first actors and actresses in England," said Mac Lear the other evening to the rabble collected about the door of a place which he had temporarily fitted up at the village of I——e, near Modbury. "I say, honey, you have heard of Mrs. Siddons, haven't you?"

"Mrs. Sinkings? what, the wold woman that goes about a buying rabbit-skins?" replied a Devonshire bumpkin.

"Och, botheration! no: I mean the great actress, known in all parts of the known world."

"Well, what o' her?" said another lout.

"Why, honeys, she is no more to be compared to my wife, who plays here to-night, than a full bottle of champagne is to a glass of new whisky, or a ripe melon to a mealy potato!—Och, here comes grimalkin at last. Why didn't you come to your post before, ould one? You know I want to dress for Rolla; but you mind nothing except snuff and gossiping."

"Ah," said Mrs. Bromley, as she took her place as door-keeper, "I am always sure to come in for some of your elegant epithets, as a return for the trouble I take to let no one go in without paying; but what can one expect from such a bog-trotting Irish brute.—Seven o'clock, I declare! Ah, now the dear preacher is just going into his pulpit at Modbury; while I am compelled to stand at this wicked playhouse door. O, that I could give up my sinful office of being the handmaiden to cursed Thespis,—that my ears might no longer be assailed with the abominable language of the stage! O this manager! 'Beshrew his heart, for sending me about, to catch my death with jaunting up and down;' and here suffering 'every scurvy knave to use me at his pleasure.'——I say, good folks, the play is just going to begin; you had better go in. 'Tis a most excellent

tragedy, full of sound morality, and tending to inspire you with loyalty to your king, love for your country, and reverence for your sacred religion. Alas! nothing will melt their stony hearts, as the preacher says. The dear man, I hope he will remember me in his prayers."

While the old woman was thus muttering her discontents at the door, the play of *Pizarro* was performing within, to an audience of about twenty villagers. The performance had not proceeded very far, when two or three raw-boned fellows with constables' staves rushed on the stage, with Mrs. Bromley clinging to them behind, loudly shrieking "fire! thieves! the fellows won't pay!" This occasioned a scene of general confusion, and we all came forward to learn the cause. The chief of the constables, we perceived, was the village carpenter. He had fitted up the theatre, in his rude way, for which he insisted on being paid a shamefully exorbitant price. This vile imposition Mac Lear had justly resisted. Lifting up his staff, the man of office advanced towards the manager, and thus began his oratory.—

"I be comed here to take you up, and ale that do belong to ye, for desarters and vagrants from your own parishes; and to corry ye before Justice D——, who ha' zent me to exercise the la'

upon ye. And I do charge all that be here, for King George's sake, to aid and azzist I in doing my duty."

"Carry me before a justice, you splawpeen! What do you mean by that?" replied Mac Lear.

"Why you do come here a play-acting without a license, and—"

"Och, if that's all, I'll soon be after quieting your conscience on that score. I have got a license in my pocket, which I always carry about me to stop the jaws of such land-sharks as you are." Adroitly producing an old whisky license, he continued,—"There, look at that, my Thady O'Whack. There is your master's coat of arms at the head of it; and see if I haven't a right to perform with my company wherever I plase."

The perplexed constable now scratched his head amain: he turned the paper over several times, unwilling to confess his ignorance in not being able to read it, and at last said,—"Ees, I zee the king's arms be at the top on't; but for ale that, you shall go wi' I to Justice D. and then I shall get properly paid for my work."

"I'll not go, by the powers!"

"O, we'll zoon zee that," said the constable; and then, with the aid of his assistants, seized on Mac Lear, and attempted to pinion his arms.

"I'll die before I'll be dragged to justice like a criminal," cried the indignant manager. "I have done no man an injury; and if striving to get an honest bit of bread for my poor wife and children be accounted a crime, then this is no longer to be called the land of liberty and humanity."

Mrs. Mac Lear now rushed forward, and clinging to her husband, exclaimed, "For pity's sake, Mac Lear, listen to a wretched wife. Our misfortunes have been very great, but do not add to them yourself by vainly opposing the authority of this cruel man, and put it in his power to ruin us quite. You have committed no crime to dread the rigour of punishment; then boldly and willingly meet the impartial eye of Justice; and should you have professionally infringed on the laws of our country, ask but for pardon, and Mercy, which on a British judgment-seat is ever seen to recline on the bosom of Justice, will smile forgiveness on your errors."

"Come, noo more o' your play-acting here, mistress. Bring 'em along," said the constable, "we have noo time to lose."

"Thou hast seen a farmer's dog bark at a beggar,
And the creature run from the cur; there,'
There thou might'st behold the image of authority;—
A dog's obey'd in office."

It was in vain that poor old Mrs. Bromley fell on her trembling knees, and implored them for the love of Christ to refrain from their barbarous purpose: it was in vain she offered to restore the few shillings she had taken at the door; it was in vain that Mac Lear nobly offered to go alone as a surety for his company, and confront the terrible frowns of the incensed justice; vain the entreaties of a weeping wife, and vain the sighs and tears of beautiful Mary. The savage wretches were alike inexorable to every thing that touches the heart of humanity; and we were all dragged in the most unfeeling manner to the petty tribunal of an ignorant and haughty magistrate, who seemed determined to display the utmost stretch of his power in cruelly punishing a few innocent people.

On our way to this English inquisitor's seat of power, Mary's tears and the thoughts of one so young and lovely being exposed to all the horrors and indignities of a common prison, filled me with inexpressible misery. For myself, I so utterly despise the sneer of ignorant vulgarity and the supercilious disdain of gilded pride, that I am invulnerable to all their shafts. Shakspeare, for a cause far less innocent than this, experienced the vengeance of the Cherlecot corregidor; then

why should I complain, or feel hurt at an indignity that must redound on the oppressor and not on the oppressed. Little did Sir Thomas Lucy conceive that the poor youth whom he banished from the bosom of his family, would one day become the boast and glory of his own country, and the admiration of the whole enlightened world: that his ashes would be enshrined in the bosom of immortal Fame, and pilgrims flock from the remotest lands to visit his hallowed tomb! When Mahomet led his followers to the second battle against the disbelieving tribe of the Koreish on mount Ohud, not Hinda, wife of Abu Sophian, chief of the branch of Omiyah princes of Mecca, who with the women of her tribe inspired with their music the warriors to deeds of valour, felt more savage and malignant joy as she ate of the smoking entrails of Hamza, the uncle of Mahomet, who fell in the sanguinary conflict, than did the constable, as he led poor Mac Lear and his company prisoners to the house of the justice. I will now give you, in a dramatic form, what occurred at the distant mansion of the magistrate.

SCENE,—A LIBRARY.

Enter the JUSTICE, *attended by his servant* JOE.

Joe. The players are all brought up, your

worship, and the constables are waiting with 'em in the hall.

Justice. I am glad on't: I trust not one has escaped. Go, let them be brought before me.

[*Exit Joe.*

O, how I have longed for one glorious opportunity of showing the world the noble justice and wisdom of the laws that govern these kingdoms. How far does the legislature of this country surpass that of Sparta, Greece, and Rome! They suffered players to roam unrestricted and uncontrolled, to propagate wherever they pleased their abominations and lies, and disseminate the seeds of vice and pollution in the minds of the rising generation. O, that ever Greek or Roman plays should be suffered to be read in our schools and universities! O, that Government would in its wisdom but enact a law to burn all the detestable tragedies and comedies of the classics! How should I glory to behold every dramatic production extant collected in one horrid pile of abomination, and with my own hand to kindle the torch of destruction that should consume it to ashes!

Enter JOE.

Joe. Zur, zur, they have catched the rascal

that broke into poor widow Wilcox's house, and stole her silver watch and two spoons.

Justice. And what of that?

Joe. Why, your honour, they found the things upon him, and have brought him to you.

Justice. Then they must take him away again, and keep him in hold till I am at leisure. I have business of greater moment in hand at present. Bless me! the people seem to think that Justice has nothing to do but dance attendance at their heels, like a lacquey in livery, or a waiting-woman, always ready with a needle and thread to mend the holes that lawless violence and thievery choose to tear in their pockets. Send the players in instantly.

Joe. I can't think, zur, why you be zoo spitish against the players. Why some o' em do look like kings and queens: I never zeed such a fine show before. I should dearly like to go to a play.

Justice. No doubt: and learn how to cheat your master with dexterity. There 's another of the evils attending stage-performances. Their *High Life below Stairs* is an infernal school for teaching servants how to plunder and ruin their masters. Send the wretches in. [*Exit Joe.* I'll crush this hydra-headed monster of iniquity with the golden mace of uncorrupted justice.

Enter MAC LEAR, MRS. MAC LEAR, ADOLPHUS, MRS. BROMLEY, WENTWORTH, GRUNDY, CLIFFORD, *and other Players, guarded by the Constables.*

So! *(addressing Mac Lear)* you, I suppose, call yourself the manager of this precious gang of vagabonds, that go about scattering the first principles of every thing that is evil and pernicious to society.

Adolphus. (putting himself forward) Your very *gentlemanly* accusation I beg leave to repel, and pronounce as utterly false—

Justice. What, sir! Who are you, that dare give a magistrate the lie? I'll have you publicly whipped at the cart's tail, and give you a twelvemonth's imprisonment to boot. Are you the manager?

Adol. No: but I am he, who for myself defy your brutal tyranny.—

Justice. Push him back; silence him.

[*Adolphus is thrust back by the Constables.*

I have all your names before me. Which is Mac Lear?

Mac Lear. I am he, your honour.

Justice. You now stand at this awful tribunal of impartial justice, accused of being the ring-

leader of a set who go about and are guilty of the crime of enacting, reciting, and performing tragedies, comedies, operas, farces, burlettas, &c., before audiences assembled to behold such pernicious representations, without a license, contrary to the statutes and laws of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. What have you to say, fellow, in your own defence?

Mac Lear. To say? Why that, by the powers, you are mistaken; for we have played but twice in your village, and then performed neither tragedy, comedy, nor opera, but a new burlesque on both and all three together, your honour: so that we stand not "within your danger," having done nothing for which the law can take hold of us, you see.

Justice. That poor subterfuge shall not save you. I have witnesses ready to swear that you have all been engaged in exhibiting stage-performances contrary to the act; for which I shall proceed to commit you forthwith to the bridewell prison.

Mac Lear. Commit! Och, what are you after? What, commit me, a noble Englishman, born and brought up in sweet Ireland, for only trying to procure a crust o' bread and a few murphies to stuff into the craving bellies of his poor wife and children?

Justice. Then you ought to get your bread by other means, than those of demoralization and picking the pockets of the country at large. Work, work, and earn your living by the sweat of your brow.

Mac Lear. Och, bad luck to it! and I do work,—few so hard, your honour. Consider how often and how many miles I pad the hoof to procure towns for my company to perform in. Then I always assist the carpenters in the erection of the buildings, fit up the whole of the stage and scenery myself, wait on ladies and gentlemen for bespeaks, procure all the stage-properties, attend rehearsals, look out the performers' dresses, take the money at the door till the play begins, change all the scenes, manage the machinery, prompt the actors, and perform all the first characters in tragedy, comedy, and farce. Och, I work like any galley-slave, and all won't do to keep the jade Poverty from the door. I pick no pockets: those who don't choose to go to the theatre, like your honour, stay away. Blessed St. Patrick, the little I get, I get by the sweat o' my brow, sure and sure, although I was born as good a gentleman as yourself, and no disparagement either; for my mother traced her descent from the Milesian princes, and my forefathers through nineteen generations were Grand Knights of

Munster. I was educated by an uncle, a priest, in a Carthusian monastery, where I learnt—

Justice. O, worse and worse! Why you may, for aught I know, be a Jesuit; and go about thus disguised to corrupt the people both in their morals and loyalty. Yes, yes, I see there's treason in your very looks. You may, for any thing I can tell, be half of you Romish priests,—a nest of traitorous hornets. It doubly behoves me, as a wise and loyal magistrate, to put a stop to your diabolical proceedings. I shall instantly make out your mittimuses, happy to have it in my power to punish such daring wretches as you all are; who in despite of law and gospel, travel the whole country for the purpose of propagating the horrid systems of idolatry, witchcraft, jacobinism, and immorality.

Adol. Again I repeat it, your accusation is false!

Justice. Your punishment shall be proportionate to your insolence, sir. But I will condescend to prove the truth of my assertions:—In numerous plays you solemnly invoke and appeal to the heathen deities, as the pagan Romans and Greeks did; you worship the sun in some plays, —as I see here by one of your bills for to-night,— and sing hymns to him, and pretend to imitate

fire descending from heaven on an altar. Is not this the grossest idolatry and profane mockery of ancient sacred institutions? Then for witch-craft and enchantments, witness the horrid things you utter, written by that fellow Shakspeare in one of his hellish plays. O, how much is it to be regretted that the worthy magistrate who had him taken up for deer-stealing, did not have him hanged! How much vile trash and gross wick-edness would the world have been spared, had the villain but made his early exit on the gallows!

Adol. (half aside).

"O, be *thou* hanged, inexorable dog!
And for thy life let justice be accus'd.
Thou almost mak'st me waver in my faith,
To hold opinion with Pythagoras,
That souls of animals infuse themselves
Into the trunks of men: thy stupid spirit
Governed an ass; who, hanged for stubbornness,
Even from the gallows did his dull soul fleet,
And whilst thou lay'st in thy unhallow'd dam,
Infus'd itself in thee; for thy conceptions
Are ass-like, sense-perverting, and most ignorant."

Justice. What's that you are muttering be-tween your teeth, sirrah? You can't endure the touch-stone of truth. Learn wisdom, young man, ere it be too late: forsake the path of jacobinism;

for with what plots, treasons, and foul conspiracies, abuse of kings and governments, do not some of your plays abound? With what indignities is that sacred representation of majesty itself, a justice of the peace, treated by a vile tinker in *John Bull?* And for cruelty, the *auto-da-fé* of the inquisition cannot equal your dismal exhibitions of murders, suicides, regicides, and deaths in all their bloody and horrible varieties.

Adol. How falsely conceived are your notions of the stage. You have deemed a man worthy of the gallows, whom England glories in acknowledging as one of her brightest ornaments, and whose name will be idolized while taste and literature exist on earth. You have ignorantly condemned the laboured productions of some of the best and wisest men in the church and state, which grace the stage and delight a British audience. Do you not know that the theatre is the bower of literature, the retreat of the Muses, where the bright and elegant flowers of poesy bloom immortal?

Justice. Vile theatrical jargon!

Adol. The stage is the mirror of the world, held up by the hand of genius

> To show the very age and body o' th' time,
> Its form and pressure,"

and which reflects the different characters that compose the motley groupes of its various inhabitants. In such a glass you may, perhaps, one day view yourself, drawn to the life,—a just object of ridicule and contempt.

Justice. Why, you jackpudding! I'll have you put in the pillory, for your audacious impudence. A noble stage for acting a part to the diversion and merriment of a market audience.

Adol. I do not fear the utmost your malice can do to *me.* "I am in England, sir, where the man who bears about him an upright heart, bears a charm too powerful for tyranny to humble."

Justice. Upright heart, indeed! Whoever heard of a player having an upright heart, or any thing but downright villany belonging to him! And what art thou, *(to Mrs. Bromley)* that lookest like the withered relic of some former age, the resurrection of an Egyptian mummy?

Mrs. B. Sir, I have seen better days, and once moved in a far different sphere; but misfortunes are not crimes, nor can I help the infirmities and appearance of age with which you have, unlike a gentleman, cruelly reproached me.

Mrs. Mac Lear. O, sir, let me entreat you that you will forgive, in this one instance, our offence against the strict letter of the law, and

we will never again enter your village. I am the mother of three children; and can you be so cruel as to tear me from my poor weeping infants and send me to a prison, for only exerting the abilities I possess in aid of their support, and to procure for them and my aged widowed mother the necessaries of life?

Justice.—But the pernicious stuff you utter in plays demand of justice—

Mrs. Mac Lear. Nay, sir,—

"The quality of mercy is not strained;
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath: it is twice bless'd;
It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes.
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest; it becomes
The throned monarch better than his crown.
His sceptre shows the force of temporal power,
The attribute to awe and majesty,
Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings:
But mercy is above this sceptr'd sway,
It is enthroned in the hearts of kings,
It is an attribute to God himself;
And earthly power doth then show likest God's,
When mercy seasons justice. Therefore, sir,
Though justice be thy plea, consider this,—
That in the course of justice, none of us
Should see salvation: we do pray for mercy;
And that same prayer doth teach us all to render
The deeds of mercy."

Justice. All this is very fine.—If such, indeed, were the language and sentiments of the stage—but far otherwise.

Constable. (aside to the Justice) I do hope, zur, avore I do ha' the pleasure o' taking o'em to prison, you'll make 'em pay I vor the work I done about their playhouse, and all my trouble o' bringing them avore your worship.

Justice. Ye men and women of iniquity, it is expected before you take your departure for Exeter prison, that you pay this honest man for his work, in erecting a stage and seats, and likewise for his trouble in bringing you to justice.

Mac Lear. Not a thirteen shall he have, if I go to prison. Och, what would you be after having me pay a man for robbing me?

Constable. Then take and hang 'em ale up at once, your worship.

Justice. I had better compromise this business, after all. I must find some excuse for sending them off again. *(aside)* Though I abhor your practices, yet, moved by extreme compassion and reluctant that you should suffer that rigour which the law demands, I am willing that your sentence should be commuted into a trifling fine. Pay the constable his demands, and I give you all your freedom.

Mac Lear. His charge is an imposition.

Justice. No matter: he shall be paid; and so will I for the warrant made out to take you up, or you shall all immediately be packing for bridewell. I am not to be trifled with.

Mac Lear. Then I have it not in my power to satisfy his unreasonable demands, and we must be content to suffer your oppression. Did I order your infernal warrants to be made out for taking up myself? Hubbaboo, man! you are after being too good natured—

Mrs. Mac Lear. O, here is my wedding ring, give him that, perhaps—

Mary. And here is another ring of gold, and a handsome brooch; he shall have them both, if he will but be merciful. O, do not, do not send us, sir, to a prison.

Adol. Mary, forbear; beauty and misfortune plead in vain to wretches like these. I, sir, will pay all your exemplary justice demands; both for yourself and that tender-hearted barbarian. There take it. *(flings down money)* Now let us begone from this house, where

"Through tattered clothes small vices do appear,
Robes and furred gowns hide all. Plate sin in gold,
And the strong lance of justice hurtless breaks;
Arm it in rags, a pigmy's straw doth pierce it."

Justice. For once my too gentle clemency prevails over justice, and you may all depart. Be thankful, and take care you never again attempt to enter the village over which I reign in happy peace, to pollute the innocent minds of its worthy inhabitants, who are guiltless of crime, with the deadly and sin-creating poison of dramatic exhibitions.

Adol. Farewell, sir, and remember this: it is a quotation from the immortal Shakspeare, and aptly meet for the occasion:—"We are the abstract and brief chronicles of the time. After your death you were better have a bad epitaph, than our ill report while you live." Alas for thy authority!

You see, my dear Frank, that I am not yet free from the malevolent persecutions of fickle Fortune. Still, through every change of my chequered lot, through weal and through woe,

I remain,

Unalterably yours,

SYLVATICUS.

LETTER L.

Kingswear, Dartmouth.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

A SECOND time have I quitted Mac Lear's company, and again joined Vincent. This will, no doubt, astonish you much: but before you condemn, allow me to be heard in my defence. The parents of Mary have often upbraided me, and endeavoured to lessen me in her esteem, because I made no progress in my profession. Alas, how could I improve? The manager engrossing to himself all the first characters, the assumption or embodying of which is the best practical improvement in the art, and without a single example of chaste or elegant acting before me. Vincent, by letter, repeatedly solicited me to return to him, offering all the first youthful tragedy and comedy, and continually asserting he should go from this place to open a nobleman's private theatre, where plays would be got up in the first style, and benefits ensure great profits. These are the reasons which led me to Dartmouth, and induced me to give this man another trial.

I took my last benefit with Mac Lear at Dodbrook, Kingsbridge, in a temporary theatre that stands on the spot where the celebrated Peter Pindar was born. Some time before I left, a Prologue was sent anonymously from London for the Dodbrook stage, designed to revive a remembrance of the Doctor's birth-place, and paying a high panegyric to his great abilities. This, spoken with effect by Mrs. Mac Lear, drew several crowded houses.

My parting with Mary was too painful for me largely to dwell on. She accompanied me three miles on my journey hither; and O, how long did we linger, and part and meet, then part and meet again,—unable to pronounce that last, sad word, farewell! "O, do not, do not, Mary, forget me when I am far, far away; or suffer another, who will not, cannot love thee as I do, to pollute those ruby lips by breathing on them the pretended vows of an eternal passion! Let not thy ears drink in the soft delusive voice of flattery, till thou rememberest no more thy oft-repeated promises of inviolable attachment to me. Think, often think, Mary, of those happy hours we have past together; and should cold forgetfulness of me steal over thy memory, look but on the moon, beneath whose sweet beams we have so often

wandered together, and it will, in silent but expressive language reproach thy inconstancy, and bid thee think of one who lives and breathes but for thee. Mary, forget me not; and the full sum of earthly happiness will one day be ours." "Forget you? never!" she replied, as she met my ardent embrace; while the tear of passion, so painfully sweet, that gushed from her beautiful dark eye, met and mingled with my own on my burning cheek.

The last close, delirious kiss of fondness and parting anguish, like a momentary sun-gleam shot through the clouds of a dark and tempest-troubled sky, passed from my lips I know not how. It was anguish and bliss strangely mingled, a mournful joy perishingly sweet; and I found myself parted and far off from Mary, ere I was conscious of the full force of my sorrow and regret. Then it was I felt that I could for her willingly have relinquished my new engagement, and all its enticing prospects; that rather than be sundered from Mary, and leave her exposed to the temptations of new admirers, and myself to the danger of powerful rivals, I could be content to toil twice seven long years even through the irksome drudgery of performing subordinate and often double characters. But shame, pride, am-

bition, and hope, came to my aid, and I at length triumphed over the weakness and jealousy of my heart: then waving my hand as in a last adieu, proceeded on my melancholy way, and saw her no more.

My first appearance here was in the character of Adrian, in the interesting play of *Adrian and Orilla;* and my efforts to please were rewarded with flattering applause. The manager perceiving the favourable reception I met with, either instigated by a mean jealousy, or to "feed fat the ancient grudge" he bore me, seemed determined to check my aspirations after theatrical fame, and continually cast me inferior, unsuitable, and consequently disagreeable parts. I began to fear he had artfully deceived me, as I could not find among the performers the least belief in his assertions of private theatricals under noble patronage. Two or three of the company suddenly left him; a convincing proof that they considered his boastings to be mere fabrications. Things, therefore, proceeded but roughly, and I unceasingly regretted a worse than useless separation from the object of my tenderest affections.

On Friday evening last, the theatre was better filled than it had been for some time before; and on the Saturday morning I paid my customary

visit to the manager for my week's salary. But what was my consternation and surprise, when I entered his lodgings, to find no manager there; to find him, and his wife and children all fled; his scenery, dresses, and properties, rags and sticks, all vanished like a troop of ghosts at the "crowing of the cock!" Not a vestige left behind, or certain means to trace their flight. What a wretch must this be, to leave men, women, and children, whom he had brought together, destitute and wretched, without the means of discharging their debts or even procuring another meal! He has taken a deep and ample revenge of me, and no doubt triumphs in the success of his plans.

I have since learnt that this infamous manager had a boat ready prepared, waiting for him after the last performance; in which, with his wife and children, and all his theatrical paraphernalia, he embarked and set sail for Plymouth. Where I shall wander to next, God only knows. I have as yet no determined point of destination; but there is a Providence above, and on its direction do I fully rely, endeavouring to believe with Pope, that "whatever is, is right."

I remain, yours sincerely,

SYLVATICUS.

LETTER LI.

Kingswear, Dartmouth.

O, MY friend, where shall I find words by which to give vent to the tortured feelings I now endure! A combination of calamities seem at once to assail me. How shall I utter that which I cannot bear to think upon without emotions of frantic jealousy, grief, and rage. Mary is false! The cup of anguish is full, and I have surely reached the consummation of my miseries. A friend at Kingsbridge has informed me of all the circumstances, and there is nothing left for Hope to hang a single doubt on, of her utter falsehood and disregard to all that rendered sacred our tender and, I foolishly thought, indissoluble passion. Her father and family have all left Mac Lear, seized on his scenery for arrears of salary due to them, and are gone to some distant town, where they have set up for themselves; while Mary is shortly to be married to a dashing actor from Plymouth, who instigated her father to this new undertaking.

And canst thou, Mary, forget my boundless

fondness? forget thy vows of constancy? Nay, forget the tortured anguish of my heart when last I parted from thee? O, hadst thou felt but half what I then endured, thou never couldst have forgotten him who would have died for thee. —'Tis past! the dream, the enchanting dream of youthful love, which flung so sweet a spell of unutterable beauty and delight over all things that came within its magic circle, is broken; and I am awakened from a paradise of blissful illusions to a dreary wilderness, where all is tempest, darkness, and suffering. Then learn, my heart, to check thy unquiet throbbings; and strive to endure with patience the miseries thy lot has prepared for thee. Mary, thou art faithless; yet I can think of thee but with emotions of tenderness, and my despairing Muse seems unwilling to abandon the wonted cheerful and inspiring theme.

TO MARY.

O, thou wert to my ravished sight,
All that the earth holds fair;
Thy form was like those shapes of light
That float on balmy air,
Around the good in danger's hour,
To guard them from malignant power,

Mary.

O, like those stars were thy dark eyes,
That 'twixt the clouds of night,
Dart their sweet radiance o'er the skies
Unperishingly bright,
As in refulgent pomp they move,
Breathing rich strains of heavenly love,
Mary

Thy voice was like that dulcet tale
Which in the evening grove,
To those bright stars the nightingale
Tells, when she mourns her love;
And, as upon thy words I hung,
All Nature listens to her song,
Mary.

Thy breath was like the wind that steals
Amid the orange flowers,
Thy cheek o'th' tint the rose reveals
In the wealthy Nile's gay bowers:
Thy lips the ripe pomegranate's hue;
Thy veins the fragrant violet's blue,
Mary.

The powerful spell of thy sweet smile,
Like moon-glance on the deep,
Comes o'er my soul,—not to beguile
And charm my woes to sleep;
But the dark surges of despair
With light to make more hideous there,
Mary.

But O, thy shape, thy voice, thine eyes,
Thy smile no more shall charm;
The spell is broke,—the false disguise
No longer hides thy form:
Inconstancy hath changed thee quite,
And turned thy brightness into night,
Mary.

I dreamt thou wert as true as fair,
And thy fond vows of love
Sweet as the song of poets were,
Or voice of silvery dove;
But treacherous as the morn's bright wave,
That sinks the bark in midnight grave,
Mary.

Yet may'st thou never, never feel
The pangs that I endure:
O, how my limbs with madness reel;
Can time this anguish cure?
Nay,—give to me a peaceful grave,
Where yonder murmuring willows wave,
Mary.

Soon will this breaking heart be calm;
My sorrows who can tell?
Death is to me the only balm,—
To thee a long farewell!
Heap on me, heap the turf-clods high,
Victim of thy inconstancy,
Mary.

Fling on my tomb one simple flower,
There drop one pitying tear;
The thought shall soothe my parting hour,
And render thee still dear:
My spirit near thee oft shall be,
To guard thee from all misery,

Mary.

Spring is abroad; the flowers again put forth their beautiful blossoms, and music and odours come floating on every breeze. The sweet-briar lanes are rich with balmy dews, and every object seems to partake of Nature's gay festivity. But all is winter here: cold, dark, and cheerless desolation reigns in the aching heart of

Your friend

SYLVATICUS.

LETTER LII.

L—— Parsonage.

MY KIND FRIEND,

You will perceive, on the receipt of this, that I am again in Dorsetshire. Yes, shortly after I wrote my last letter to you, I determined to return once more to the home which gave me birth, and the longing arms of an affectionate mother. I walked the whole of the journey; and to divert my mind and calm my wretched feelings, on my pedestrial route visited those objects of antiquity which I had not previously seen.

Drew Steignton, near Newton Bushel, was a grand seat of the Celtic druids, as its name imports; and here, I believe, is the only altar now to be found in the county of Devon. It stands on a farm called Shelstone. The flat, or upper stone of this cromlech, is fourteen feet in diameter; it is supported by three upright rude pillars, and declines from a horizontal position considerably to the north. A little to the south of this grand altar meanders the Teign, in all the sublimely-wild diversity of lofty rocks, forest-clad mountains, and

hanging woods. In the centre of its bed, and nearly opposite the cromlech, poised on a vast block of stone, stands a logan eighteen feet in length and, at the western point, ten feet in height; yet I could move it easily with one hand.

Here, amid their ancient groves of oak, sheltered by lofty hills encompassed with the most rich and variegated foliage, dwelt the venerable druids in patriarchal power and rural simplicity. The Teign meandered through their embowered retreats with its flower-empurpled banks, its cliffs beautifully fringed with geranium-tinted verdure, and marble rocks, round which the woodbine gracefully wandering spread over its birth-place its carnation bloom, and scented with delicious odours the circumambient air. Not the famed valley through which the Peneus flowed, whose hallowed shades of rose and myrtle were the haunts of gods, looked more lovely than this once-sacred spot, watered by the limpid Teign; its waves still murmur in music round the base of the stone of trial, round the logan that stands in isolated and solitary grandeur amid the waters, like the stones of remembrance set up by Joshua in the floods of Jordan. Beneath the spreading boughs of those oaks stood the circular dwellings of the druids, with their reed-clad roofs ending

in a sharp point. Deep in these woods stood the stately and awful tree of magic, with its branches lopped off and two of its largest limbs fixed on the top in the form of the letter T, which, with the surrounding groves, was constantly sprinkled with the blood of victims. Here, too, dwelt the vestal druidesses in close embowering shades, apart from the whole world, whose powers of enchantment were believed to extend over all the elements and attributes of nature. The virgin prophetesses, who assisted in the offices and shared in the honours and emoluments of the druidical priesthood, pretended, according to Mela, "to raise storms and tempests by their incantations, to cure the most inveterate diseases, to transform themselves into all kinds of animals, and to predict future events."

Still does the scene around me wear its ancient majestic features, its wild and sylvan beauty, as in the Celtic ages of darkness and superstitious cruelty. The shades of those who then inhabited this sacred place of death and blood, to the eye of him who loves to pore over the musty scrolls and half-obliterated records of yore, are yet dimly seen on the far-off horizon of departed time to move along in all their gloomy severity and barbaric state, like those aerial and gigantic spectres

that travellers behold, on climbing the summit of lofty mountains, walking amid the clouds, which are but their own unsubstantial shadows cast by the morning sun on the opposite heavens. On thy flower-embroidered banks, O lovely Tegn, how sweetly hath rung the bardic harp on May-eve with the strains of enthusiastic devotion to the idol-gods of the Celtæ; while on yonder hill-top the bright flames of the Bealtine rose luminous through the midnight air. What solemn festivals have been held here on May-day, when the earth was covered with flowers and these sacred forests filled with love-inspired minstrelsey. The lay of the wood-thrush rung in concert with the harps of bards, who awoke the early morning with their hallowed greetings; and the blackbird's mellow pipe delightfully mingled with the silvery murmurs of the cushart dove, and the wild song of the gleaming river going on his way, rejoicing like a giant in his strength. The double sacrificial fires are lighted amid those freshly-waving groves: the druids, vates, bards, and female prophets assemble around the stately tree of magic amid the forest; garlands of vervain, euplea, and mistletoe are wreathed about its trunk, and blood-drops sprinkled on grove and bower by the arch-druid in his pontifical

habiliments of many colours. The sun is risen above the eastern hills in cloudless splendour: trumpet, and horn, and stringed instruments of varied tones, blent with innumerable voices of gathering multitudes, join in universal chorus to hail his glorious appearance. The white bull and the snow-coloured steed, with a train of unhappy captives, are led betwixt the double fires as victims to the bright luminary of day. Groups of dancers, led by the ancient sacred vestals, wheeling in mysterious circles from the right hand to the left, are seen advancing through the groves, and moving in solemn procession round the blood-devoted cromlech. The captive is brought bound to the stone of sacrifice: the druids mount with him on the lofty altar, and plunge their gleaming knives in the bosom of their shrieking victim: the diviners prophesy from the flowing of his blood, that trickles down the sides of the horrid cromlech: his groans are drowned in the shouts of the surrounding spectators, who applaud the inhuman ceremony; while the woods ring with the terrific death-hymn, struck from the solemn-sounding lyres of the unpitying bards.

I must wave at present all further account of my little *Itinerarium Curiosum*, and pass to my

arrival at L. How did my heart leap with joy, when I caught the first distant view of the range of naked hills that stand the gigantic guardians, against the war of intrusive billows, on the coast where lies my native village. How light and swift were my steps, when first I beheld the battlements of the castellated mansion of L. and those lofty woods and groves which surround that stately edifice and its romantic village. It was evening as I reached the old Parsonage. My heart beat audibly, as I opened the wicket-gate that led to the door. O, how do long years of absence endear the spot where first we breathe the vital air; the scene of our earliest remembrances, of our happiest moments! The numerous flowers that filled the little garden in front, were in full bloom, and exhaled an exuberance of sweets: many of the shrubs which I had planted with my own hand, were grown luxuriantly; and the bower which I had formed of lilacs, box, honeysuckles, and other plants, and wherein I had spent so many hours in study, and penned so many poetic lines, was become quite a wilderness of blossoms. I passed hastily on, and in a few moments, on the threshold of my birthplace, found myself in the arms of an affectionate mother: whose tears of joy bedewed my cheeks,

and whose tender love requited me for many past sufferings and disappointments.

I close my letter with another stanza, written on one whom it does not seem that I can ever forget.

TO MARY.

'Tis eventide.—The horizon glows
With richest tints of the Persian rose,
With diamond beams forth shooting bright
A downward flood of parting light;
While the amethystine clouds unfold
Their radiant skirts engrained with gold.
'Tis glory all above;—beneath
Delicious stillness,—save where breathe
The idle winds a wizard song,
The flowery-mantled groves among;
Save where sweet music's wildest gush
Comes from the forest, and the rush
Of the distant mountain's hoarse cascade,
That flashes through the green oak shade.

'Tis twilight dim;—and from the skies
Are faded all their brilliant dies;
But there is one sweet lonely star
Amid that dimness, shooting far
Its beams into the occident,
Like maiden's eye in languishment,
When sorrow from her cheek so fair
Steals the last rose that lingers there.
The glow-worm, in the woodshaw gloom,
Doth her low violet-bower illume

With amorous beam,—her lover's guide;
Like Hero's torch, that o'er the tide
Of Hellespont from Sestos' tower
A beacon gleamed at midnight hour,
To light her loved Leander brave
To her fond arms, through storm and wave.

Such, Mary, were to me thine eyes
That brighter beamed than evening skies,
When I, in passion's fondest hour,
Gazed on their soul-entrancing power;
Then all their magic influence shone
More radiant than the farewell sun:
Then on thy lip, that e'en outglows
The ruby in its brightest hue,
Mine, like the sunbeam on the rose,
Fell, burning with ecstatic fire,
Exhaling love's ambrosial dew,
Till, with a sigh, I seemed to expire!
Oh, bliss that words can never tell!—
But that is past!—so fare thee well!
For ever from me art thou borne;
For ever, ever from me torne!
No more the star-beam of thine eye
Shall gild my dark and stormy sky;
No more shall thy voice, like the eve-bird's sweet,
My raptured ear at twilight greet.

Thou art another's:—yet, ah! yet
I cannot check this fond regret!—
I ne'er can gaze on yon bright star
But I think of thine eye, still brighter far:

I cannot look on the moonbeam clear
But I think of thy smile: nor ever hear
The stockdove plain, the streamlet glide,
But I think of the hour when side by side
We wandered, and thy soft voice came
Like cloud-born music on my ear,
Feeding this heart's undying flame,
And whispering thou didst hold me dear;
More dear than all beside on earth,
Pomp, honour, wealth, or pride of birth.

Thou art another's:—yet, ah! yet,
Hast *thou* no soft, no fond regret
For him thou hast left to weep and sigh
When he wanders alone at evening hour,
And gazes on the star-lit sky,
That tells him of thy beauty's power?
Ah! when thou hear'st the wood-dove's tune,
And the nightingale singing to the "blessed moon;"
When thou look'st on the dewy eve-star bright,
And the emerald glow-worm's passion light,
O, think upon the hours gone by,
And breathe of pity one soft sigh,
Of guiltless pity, for the doom,
Of him who loved thee with such truth
For nothing but the dark cold tomb,
Can from the bosom of that youth
Banish thy image, which dwells there
The sweet companion of despair!

LETTER LIII.

L—— Parsonage.

My Dear Friend,

You request me to give you some account of Lulworth Castle, and its extensive domains. To show you how ready I am at all times to comply with your wishes I now sit down to give you the best information I can collect respecting this interesting place.

The manor of Lulworth was anciently in the possession of a knightly family of the name of De Lolleworth. In the reign of Edward I. Reginald de Est Lolleworth, knight, lord of Est Lolleworth, granted by charter to Reginald his son and Agnes his wife, and their heirs, this manor. Of this family not one branch now remains; all its successive generations, its honours, its fame, and its power are gone down to the chambers of the grave, and its very name preserved from total oblivion only by being affixed in perpetuity to what was once their landed and immovable possessions.

That there was, many ages ago, a castle on this estate cannot be doubted; for in Tyrrel's History

of England it is said, that Robert Earl of Gloucester in 1146 took the castle of Lullwarde for the Empress Maude: and in Speed's, that it was taken by the Earl of Warwick for Queen Margaret. Before the erection of the present castle, the ancient manor-house, called Goodly-place, which, with all its estates, in the eleventh of Edward III. came into the possession of John Novo Burgo, or Newburgh, stood directly opposite to the west door in the tower of the present church, where now stands the fine sycamore grove that backs the verdant lawn of the castle. This John de Novo Burgo was descended, though not in a direct line, from Henry de Newburgh, created first Earl of Warwick by William the Conqueror, and who received his name from the castle of Newburgh in Normandy, where he was born. From the great hall of this stately mansion, its possessors could behold through the western window of the church tower, the wax tapers shedding their consecrated light on the high altar; which, it is said, was the constant signal for their pious attendance in the house of God. Of this mansion, Leland in his Itinerary, says "The goodly manor-place of the Newborrow's, lords of East Lilleworth, is hard by the paroch-church. The last of that name, whose daughter

and heyre was married to Sir John Marney, dyed in Estsex or Southfolk, and ther was buryed. Ther standith a tumbe in East Lilleworth church, that was erected for his buryal. The genealogye of the Newborrow's, and the names of the heyres general that they married with, be yn glass windows in a parlour in the manor-place of East Lilleworth." Of this building not the least vestige of its foundation remains. The cause of its demolition is quite uncertain: it might, possibly, have been pulled down for the purpose of erecting another mansion, about a mile distant, called Mount Poynings.

In the second year of Henry VII. by the marriage of Christian, daughter and heiress of Sir Roger Newburgh, the last male of that line, this manor and seat came to John, son and heir of Henry Marney, knight; and on the marriage of Catherine, their eldest daughter and co-heiress with her sister Elizabeth, descended, first to George Ratcliffe; and after his death, by a second marriage, to Sir Thomas Poynings, knight. This gentleman was a military officer of high distinction; created by Henry VIII. Baron Poynings of East Lilleworth, and appointed general of the army in France. He purchased the monastery of Bindon at its dissolution, with various other

lands in the neighbourhood; and built a noble mansion styled Mount Poynings, near the farm-house called Brongate, which was afterwards pulled down by Thomas, Viscount Howard.

But to close as quickly as possible the uninteresting detail of genealogical tables, recording the names of those, of whom we know nothing but that they merely lived and died,—these domains came into the Howard family, by the marriage of Thomas Howard, son of the third Duke of Norfolk, with Elizabeth, the other daughter of John Marney, and sister of Lady Poynings. This Thomas Howard was created Viscount Bindon; and, according to Coker, about the year 1600 built the present castle, out of the united ruins of Mount Poynings and Bindon Abbey. In process of time it descended, with all its demesnes, to James, grandson of Thomas Howard, who was created by James I. Earl of Suffolk; and this James sold it, with the surrounding estates, in 1641 to Humphry Wild, the ancestor of its present possessor. This handsome pile of modern architecture stands on the western borders of a wild and dreary heath, whose gently-rising eminences are scattered over with Celtic tumuli, while its solitary barrenness forms a striking contrast to the verdant park and luxuriance of

waving woodlands that surround the mansion on every side, and enclosed by a wall four miles in circumference.

This princely fabric is an exact cube of eighty feet, with a round and noble tower at each corner proudly lifting its embattled head sixteen feet above the walls, which are said to be six feet in thickness. An elevated terrace of freestone, with a handsome balustrade, surrounds the castle on every side except to the west, where it joins a green terrace of earth and opens on a flowery lawn, commanding a picturesque view of the English Channel, and backed with lofty wood beautiful as the fabled shades of Elysium, in which are a fine avenue fronting the western portal, and numerous pleasant and retired walks. Many years ago, this castle was surrounded by a strong outer wall, and the access to the court-yard was through a barbacan or square tower, directly fronting the eastern, or grand portal; but this useless defence has long since been demolished. A broad flight of steps leads to the principal entrance, over which are two statues in Roman habits: on each side, betwixt two Ionic pillars, in niches, are the sculptured images of Music and Painting, but which are very indifferently executed; and above them, on

two shields, are the arms of Weld emblazoned in their proper colours. The principal front, is likewise adorned with several modern statues. The interior of this fine mansion contains several spacious and noble apartments; but the walls of the drawing-room have a mean and dingy effect, from the dull-coloured satin with which they are covered without any relief. The ceiling is handsomely painted in compartments; and there is a rich carpet which corresponds with the fresco. Several family pictures by Sir Peter Lely and Sir William Beechey are finely executed; and there are a few others by artists unknown. In this castle, constituted a palace by the residence of kings, fifteen years after its erection dwelt James I. when he came to hunt in the adjacent royal chase, or forest of Purbeck: and here Charles II. after his restoration, with the Dukes of York and Monmouth, paid visitation to an ancestor of the present family in 1665. The rooms in which those monarchs and princes slept still bear their names, and they were looked upon by me as far the most interesting apartments which the palace contains.

How often have those woods of ancient oak and beech echoed to the joy-inspiring horn, as it sounded from the court-yard of the castle at

early dawn, and roused the royal Scot from his slumbers to pursue the fleet stag on the lofty hills and wild heaths of the neighbouring island. How have these bowers reverberated the shrill neighings of eager coursers, the scream of falcons, the whoop, and shout, and laugh of jocund hunters, as the king, with a train of nobles and courtiers, descended those steps to back their fiery steeds, and scour across the heathy plains of the forest. In the happy days of the gay Charles, how rung these halls to the voice of sportive jollity and gladness. The banquet, minstrelsey, and dance, and song enlivened the rosy-winged hours beneath these lofty roofs, and spoke the noble liberality of the generous and honoured host of the palace. What loud huzzas burst from the delighted populace, that filled the court and thronged around the gates from distant parts of the county, ascending in thunder above the highest battlements of Lulworth, as the smiling monarch mounted these flower-strewed steps and entered the halls of feasting and hospitality. The cottages of the neighbouring peasants were hung with garlands, and on yonder village-green the may-pole was dressed in nodding sheaves of fragrant blossoms: here vigour, youth, and beauty mingled in the joyous dance to the sprightly sound of the

viol and the pipe: shouts of "Long live the king!" broke from every tongue: the pealing bells in yonder venerable tower, ushered in the twilight with their music: the hearts of the glad peasantry were cheered with flagons of ale: sports and manly exercises were exhibited by the rustic youth on those lawns: the voices of happy groups rung in the moonlight groves; and all was gaiety, laughter, and joy. These royal visits to the palace of Lulworth, recal to my recollection others of later days. Nearly the same rejoicings, as in the days of Charles, the same splendid entertainments took place, when our beloved and venerable sovereign George III. visited this pleasant seat, and more than once partook of its owner's magnificent hospitality.

From the beautiful lawn are seen to advantage, on the right of the palace, the very ancient and singular pyramidal tower of the village-church; and to the left, the dome and pillars, surmounted with elegant urns, of the handsome chapel, half encircled with the richest foliage of groves and tufts of lofty pine. Here, too, are seen betwixt the openings of the majestic trees, the ocean with its moving panorama of ships, an ancient Celtic camp on the hills of Purbeck, whose long range of verdure, thinly skirted with woodland, is height-

ened by the brown heath that stretches below it far away to the east, with its tumuli and dark-green clumps of pine, over which rises the gray tower of Wareham. Near it is discerned the estuary of the Frome with its white-sailed barges moving up and down, the town and bay of Poole, its neighbouring islets and heathy heights that stretch onward to meet the horizon; where, like a white cloud resting on its edge, may be perceived as the evening sunlight falls on its giant rocks, the western cliffs of Withgar's* distant island.

To the lover of antiquity, the domains of Lulworth must ever be highly interesting. About three miles to the north of the castle, stand the monastic fragments of Bindon Abbey, tastefully surrounded by rising groves, walks well suited to pensive contemplation, and streams of water on whose shady banks the song of the wood-thrush sweetly mingles with the evening murmurs of the adjacent river. In its once stately church,—of which a ruinous part of the tower, the bases of two pillars, and the fragment of the north wall only remain,—rested in sculptured pomp, the bones of all the ancient families of

* The Saxon name of the Isle of Wight.

rank in its vicinity. But its chantries are destroyed; its monuments with their armorial pride have all disappeared; the very slumberers of the grave are removed out of their resting-places; the ashes of the illustrious dead are scattered on the face of the earth; their bones are trod under the feet of clowns; and of all its former magnificence, only two or three mutilated tombs of its chief solitaires remain.

But there are numerous other sepulchral monuments, of far greater antiquity, still to be seen on this estate,—even the burial-places of the Autochthones, or aboriginal inhabitants of this part of Britain; which with divers vestiges of those early ages, have survived all the ravages of time and man to the present hour. Near the ruins of this monastery are a rampart and ditch, which continue for many miles to the west; running near Pokeswell, where they are very apparent, and appearing again beyond Weymouth, between Langton and Chickerell. "This, probably," says an antiquarian, "was intended by the Celts as their military line to defend the religious Circle of Pokeswell, and to cover the country against the invasions of the Belgæ; as the ditch is to the southward, and the bank or vallum to the north."

About half a mile from the palace lawn, a fine

dome-shaped barrow of large dimensions, in the neighbourhood of many others, was lately fixed on for the purpose of exhumation. After penetrating about three feet within the surface, a belt of large flints, embedded in the earth, was discovered surrounding the barrow to a certain height, and seemed designed as a protection to the sacred relics within. In its centre a curiously-vaulted sepulchre or kistvaen was found, composed of rude sand-stones, full three feet in height above the level of the ground, and twenty-five feet in circumference. It was so ingeniously formed into a regular arch or dome, and so firmly united together, as completely to resist the vast weight of the superincumbent earth which formed the tumulus. On removing the stones and opening this gloomy chamber of death, into which neither the sunbeams of morning, nor the purple ray of evening had for so many ages entered, a large urn, in perfect preservation and containing loose human bones mingled with a very small portion of ashes, appeared in a leaning position directly in the centre, and resting on a large flat stone. Around it were placed several upright stones, the tops of which, pointing towards each other over the urn, formed almost a second dome. The inner circle of stones appeared to have been

brought from the sea-shore, as they were evidently worn into small cavities by the action of the waves. This, I do not hesitate to pronounce was the tomb of a chief druid, whose sepulchre, with its inner circle of stones, seems to have been raised in imitation of their temples, the most ancient of all religious edifices, (if such places of worship may be so termed), and in which were offered "the sacrifices of the dead." Who could behold this once-sacred tomb of other days and years gone by, which had survived all the regal and laboured monuments, the gorgeously-sculptured tombs and bannered mausoleums of succeeding and more civilized nations, without mingled emotions of veneration, awe, and melancholy? without beholding, with the eye of imagination, the ornamented corse laid on the funeral pile, the officiating druids, the sacrifice of slaves, the dance of Celtic warriors clad in skins and decked with torques of iron and gold, bloody lustrations, and all the barbarous but solemn ceremonies which had been performed at the obsequies of the dead on this interesting spot?

Near to this barrow three others were opened, all of them containing similar vaulted tombs, but of much smaller dimensions, with inclosed urns. One of these kistvaens was erected on the south

side of the tumulus. These, there can be little doubt, were also druidical; and what leads the more strongly to this conclusion, is the certainty that not far from the site of these barrows stood once a sacred circle, or temple of the sun, and perhaps a cromlech. Till lately two of its vast stones, or pillars, brought from their original situation, of which some faint remembrance is yet preserved in the neighbourhood, were still to be seen; one stood upright, and the other lay on the ground. The latter has been broken to pieces by a stupid farmer to make a bridge; and had he not found the other useful by way of a gate post, it would doubtless ere this have shared a similar fate.

Venerable and solitary relic! thou silently speakest of other ages, gone with those beyond the flood; of nations swept for ever from the earth; of mysterious rites and blood-stained institutions, over which oblivion flings its veil of clouds and darkness! Thou art deeply furrowed with the tempests of years, and the pale moss hath spread over thee a mantle of gray.

Among the numerous tumuli that may be seen, far and near, to surround this once-sacred spot, two others were opened about the same time with those I have already mentioned. In one of them,

after penetrating to the centre, a large flat sea-stone was found; which being removed, and nothing discovered beneath it, the search was continued by digging deeper: another large flat sand-stone was soon uncovered, under which nothing could be perceived but a fine black mould: proceeding still lower, a third flat stone was taken up, and beneath it an urn lay embedded in white sand. In the other a large crucible-shaped urn, ornamented with an indented border of straight lines near the edge, appeared in the centre, and two small ones were placed leaning against its sides. These last, I should imagine, held the ashes of a warrior and his two sons, who died, or perished in battle, when very young. It has been suggested that they were those of a female and her two children; but that is hardly probable, unless we allow the female to have been an Amazonian queen among the Durotrigians, or their exterminating conquerors the Morini. Be they who they may, we cannot doubt that the tender ties of affinity, affection, and blood rendered them dear to each other while living; and in the grave they were not divided. But their legend is lost for ever: the oblivious waves of time have rolled over their tomb, and the star-beams of their fame are sunk in unfathomable darkness!

Warrior! thou hast dropped the lance;
By thee lies thy painted shield;
Nor horn, nor trump, nor war-steed's prance,
Shall wake thee to the glory of the field.

The whole of these tumuli, my friend, which have described to you, are remarkable, worthy to be recorded as peculiarities in the Celtic interments, and unlike any to be met with in Sir Richard Hoare, Dr. Stukeley, or even King's, *Munimenta Antiqua*. Another still more singular discovery has been made in the dark-brown wilds of the adjacent heath;—even that of combustion and inhumation *without urns*. The ashes of the dead appeared to have been mixed up with the blood of some victim, and moulded into the shape of a globe; then laid in a small cist, and carefully surrounded with stones. These are deviations from a custom, on which no antiquary, ancient or modern, has thrown any light. It, however, appears to me quite evident, that this strange mode of interment was either anterior to the formation of the rudest vases of the Kelts; or that these singular barrows contained the remains of some inferior personages, for whom, although their ashes were not inurned, their friends were anxious to obtain the honour of a solemn burning. How greatly is it to be regretted, that almost every work of the ancients that would have

illuminated this mysterious subject, and dispersed the clouds that must now for ever hang over it, has lamentably perished. The great work of Polybius on the trade of tin, which would have given us much interesting matter relative to the particular manners and customs, as well as commercial affairs of the Britons, is entirely lost. Livy's history of Cæsar's first invasion of this island, and that of his second written by Claudius, have shared the same fate; while those very parts of other classic writers which relate to British concerns, are buried in eternal oblivion.

From the terrace of the palace, you behold, on the summit of the nearest cliff, a strongly fortified city of the Durotrigians, or their successors the Belgic Morini. It has been hitherto considered to have been a Roman camp by all antiquarians, except Aubery, who very properly calls it a British entrenchment. I was myself, till lately, led to adopt the general opinion, as you may perceive by a former letter of mine; but I am now perfectly convinced that these strong works are wholly of British construction, and that the Romans never occupied them as a legionary station, for the following reasons:—

Nothing Roman has ever been found on opening either of the barrows just below the summit

of the cliff on which the ramparts are thrown up, on the hill itself, or any where in the immediate neighbourhood. There is not the smallest remains or trace of any Roman vicinal road, leading to or from this camp. The nearest station of the Romans to this hill-fortress was Wareham; which, according to Baxter and Stukeley, was known by the name of Morionium or Moriconium: this seems fully confirmed, by one of the roads leading from Durnovaria, the grand station of the Romans in this part of the country; which, quitting the Icknield near Stinsford Cross, is very visible as it goes over the sheep-leas at Kingston Maurward, and may be traced by several little elevations near Clift, Pallington, and Thorny-bottom, leading towards Wareham. The next nearest station of that people was Ibernio or Iburnium, now Bere Regis. This was originally a formidable hill-city of the Celtæ and Belgic Morini; and that this is the real station betwixt Venta-Geladia, or Vindogladia, and Durnovaria, left out in the twelfth and fifteenth Iters of Antonine, and the sixteenth of Richard of Cirencester, appears quite apparent: first, because it stands little more than eight miles from Dorchester, the exact distance which is attributed to some post next to Venta-Geladia in the Itineraries; and

secondly, it is situated on the ancient great street the Ickmen, Icknield, or Agmen, leading from Old Sarum to Durnovaria, which is known to be the foundation of the Roman road; while the streams of water which flow by the foot of Woodbury-hill is a further proof of its having been a permanent station of the Romans. This belief of mine is, moreover, strongly corroborated by what Dr. Stukeley says in his *Itinerarium*, which you shall hear:—"The Roman road passed upon a division between Pimpern and Bere hundred to Bere; and that I reckon a convenient distance for a station between Vindogladia and Dorchester, being near the middl: on one side 'tis about thirteen mile, on the other nine. Now in the last journey of Antoninus before mentioned, immediately after Vindogladia follows Durnovaria, M. P. IX., Dorchester being very truely nine mile off this town, Bere. I doubt not but this is the true place designed in the Itinerary; but that a town is slipped out of the copys. I think I have fortunately discovered it in the famous Ravenas, by which we may have hopes of restoring this journey to its original purity. That author mentions a town next to Vindogladia, which he calls Ibernium: this verily is our Bere. Mr. Baxter corrects it into Ibelnium and places it at

Blandford, for no other reason, as I conceive, but because he imagined it must necessarily be hereabouts. I was not a littl pleased, when I found my notion highly confirmed by a great and elegant Roman camp upon a hill near Bere; I think 'tis called Woodbury, where a yearly fair is kept. This is between Bere and Milburn upon the river. 'Tis doubly entrenched, or rather a doubl camp one within another. This town of Bere denominates the hundred too. In this case, where a Roman camp, a road, and all distances occur, which in the others are very abhorrent from reality, I imagin the reader will find little difficulty in passing over to my sentiments."

Now if the Romans had either raised or occupied this hill-city at Lulworth, there would most undoubtedly be some remains existing of a Roman road leading to one or other of the nearest stations. But there is not the least trace through any of the wild and still uncultivated heaths that lie between, of such a vicinal; while the ancient Celtic trackway, that is plainly to be perceived running along the whole line of coast from Devonshire to Nine-barrow Down beyond Corfe, leads up to this camp of Flowersbarrow, and is attended throughout its course with numerous tumuli of various dimensions. Moreover, these

ramparts are not thrown up according to the regular plan or form of a Roman camp; and, lastly, the Romans were forbidden, by the law of the twelve tables, to bury their dead within the precincts of their cities or camps. Now a boy, keeping sheep on this mountain, lately discovered lying just beneath the surface of the inner rampart, a perfect skeleton seven feet nine inches in length! It was placed with the head to the west. The skull not lying in a line with the rest of the bones, but being found in an upright position, led to a conjecture that the warrior to whom it belonged had been decapitated: it was very perfect, and the teeth beautifully white. This could not have been a Roman, but was one of the ancient chiefs of the Britons, who dwelt in this stronghold of the mountain; and whose pagan rites of interment were both that of burning the dead, and burying them entire, as I remember to have told you in a former letter. This hill, which is the western point of a mountainous line that divides the Island of Purbeck, lifts its head seven hundred feet above the level of the sea, crowned with double ramparts of great strength. The ascent on the north and west is very steep, and on the south the camp is defended by the ocean and inaccessible cliffs; while its entrance is judiciously

placed in the south-west angle near a very steep acclivity, where an army could not possibly be drawn up to an assault.

The Celtæ, like those nations of old of which we read in the Bible, dwelt in strongholds of the cliff, and on the tops of high hills, and their defence was the munition of rocks. These lofty retreats were only vast circumvallations of earth, and sometimes stones, thrown up to secure their cattle, huts, and tents from the ravages of an unmerciful enemy; and contained no buildings which had the least pretension to be called towers or palaces. "There are a vast number," says King, "of strong intrenchments in all parts of this island of a very peculiar kind, situated chiefly on the tops of natural hills; and which can be attributed to none of the various different people who have ever dwelt in the adjacent country, except to the ancient Britons. Here they lodged their wives and children, on account of any sudden war or invasion; and to which they drove their cattle at the same time from the low adjacent country. Here they formed garrisons, and made a stand; and from hence they sallied forth with confidence to repel the foe."

To prove a curious fact, that exactly such cities are existing with their inhabitants in our own

day, I shall make the following extract from Mr. John Lidiard Nicholas' *Narrative of a Voyage to New Zealand*:—"Duaterra having got all his property on shore, was now ready to conduct us to his town; which standing, as I mentioned, on the summit of a hill, rendered the approach to it a work of some labour and fatigue. * * * * * Before we reached the top, we could perceive that the town was a fortress of very great strength, considering the rude mode of warfare pursued in this island. It was encompassed with a deep and wide trench, on the inner side of which was formed a breast-work of long stakes stuck in the ground at short distances from each other, and so compactly firm as to be capable of resisting for a long time the most impetuous attack of its undisciplined assailants. Passing these fortifications, we entered the town itself, which consisted of huts built on each side of several little lanes or rather pathways; for they were made barely wide enough for one person to pass through at a time." Here we have a perfect model of a British hill-city.

In this mountain fortress I am describing to you, are yet to be seen the wells that the warlike inhabitants dug to retain the water that fell from the clouds, which were their only fountains

during a siege; and within the inner vallum are a long series of circular excavations in the ground, over which were erected their principal tents or booths; while in the south-west part of the area may be perceived, from the inequalities of the ground, where stood the different divisions for their cattle. From these lofty bulwarks the martial Britons beheld a wide expanse of ocean; from where beneath the setting sun the western waves sheeted in lines of glittering silver, appeared beyond Vindilia's isle, to the surge-smote rocks of the white cliffs of Guithor.* On land, to the west they could behold their strong capital of Dunium, or Maiden Castle, with its circle within circle, rampire piled on rampire; and to the north, the hills that bounded their kingdom with the celebrated mountain-city of Caer Paladour, built, as fables tell, by Rudhudibrass, standing on the borders of the neighbouring tribe of the Hædui; while to the east appeared the vast plains of Sorbiodunum, blending with the dark-blue heavens and the wild woodlands and heaths of the Sigontiaci. Naked mountains and beautiful forests, the growth of ages, that never had bowed beneath the woodman's axe, waving to the even-

* The British name of the Isle of Wight.

ing breeze, filled up the intermediate scene; while the limpid Var,—called by way of pre-eminence, the River, was seen gracefully meandering betwixt the opening glades, and sweetly reflecting in its mazy course the ruddy light that lingered in the western sky. A faint gleam fell on the gigantic rocks of the sacred circle, that stood in rude and solemn grandeur in the valley below, and showed the smoke of the evening sacrifice to the departed sun, ascending in a dim cloud on the twilight air; while the song of the bard, who vowed to die in his hallowed temple rather than forsake the worship of his god, as he flung his hand across the enchanted strings, floated upwards on the mountain-breeze wildly sweet and plaintively solemn.

But with what rage did the Celtic warriors, as they flung their wolf-skin robes across their shoulders, and paced with their brazen spears these formidable ramparts, behold the Roman galleys anchored by Moriconium's strand: with what gnashing of teeth and tears of anguish, shed for their fallen country, did they view the watch-fires of those insulting conquerors fling their red glare on the midnight heavens, from the captive city of Iberium, from the tented summit of Woodbury's fortified hill! Around these moun-

tain-rampires, how dreadfully has raged the storm of battle: how hath the brazen din of arms rung from cliff to cliff! Here met the proud Romans in military pomp their brave but savage foe, who nobly dared to oppose the progress of their blood-stained victories; but unavailing was the courage of Britons; they fell before the disciplined conquerors of the world, and yielded up with their lives their subjugated country! But silent and lonely now is this once-populous spot. No voice is heard here, save the raven croaking on the green walls of the city of the dead, save the simple lay of the shepherd-boy as he drives his mountain-flock to the fold in yonder valley.

How silent all things,—save the seamew's cry,
And the deep murmurs of the passing breeze,
Where trump and horn have echoed to the sky,
And battle yells rung o'er th' affrighted seas!
These now young daisies and blue harebells bloom
On many a British giant's unknown tomb.

O Rome, where now are all thy warlike ranks,
Thy mail-clad chiefs and captains of renown,
That gleaming dreadful, stormed these spear-lined banks,
And on the Britons with disdain looked down,
Thy battle-steeds, thy shields, and eagles proud,
That here were kissed by the low bending cloud?

All past away! thy warrior host is dust,
  Thy wide dominion faded like a dream;
Thy banner lost, thy shield devoured with rust,
  And all thy glory but a meteor's gleam,
That shoots across the stormy midnight sky,
Fading in darkness on the wondering eye.

From kingdoms far remote thy legions came,
On this famed isle to spread war's dreadful flame;—
But they are gone; ended their battle race;
And dropped for ever the red shield and lance!
Briton and Roman mingle in one grave,
Reckless when suns shine bright, or tempests rave!

Farewell, a long farewell, thou gore-drenched steep,
  That with thy foot dost the white surges spurn;
The sea-mist o'er thee comes, as if to weep
  On the cold ashes of some warrior's urn!

Weep thou, pale mist, for man's departed glory,
Where many a chieftain lies unknown in story.
  Thou art thyself an emblem of his pride,
Fading amid succeeding ages' brightness,
As thy dissolving form of lightness
  Cannot the rising day-star's beams abide.

I fear you will think, Frank, my letter excessively tedious; yet I cannot be content to conclude without speaking of one or two other places which I think of equal interest. About two miles to the west of the palace, on very high

ground, stands a finely-preserved council-place of the ancient druids, unprofaned by the spade or the plough. It is composed of a noble rampart of earth, on the outside almost perpendicular, but within there is an easy ascent to the top, which forms a broad walk. The area is an imperfect circle, and that part of the vallum which lies against the west is considerably higher than the rest of the mound; the whole being encompassed with a deep trench, except at the entrance which directly faces the east. It commands an immense prospect of sea and land, stands near the ancient Celtic trackway, and on the eminences on every side are seen numerous tumuli.

It was a fine summer's evening when last I visited this once-sacred enclosure; and long did I linger on the spot, after the sun had sunk beneath those hills that lie beyond the towers of Durnovaria. A seat like this, the druids, elders, and chiefs of the Durotrigians well might choose, from whence they could behold nearly the utmost extent of their kingdom, and command a view of all their principal hill-cities.* What earnest

* Cæsar informs us that the Gaulish druids, who, he says, "were imitators of the British druids, and derived from them their customs and science, at a certain time of the year sat in a certain consecrated place; to which all that had controversies came from every part around, and submitted to their judgments and decrees."

debates have been carried on within the green walls of this meeting-place of ancient counsellors; what plans proposed for the public good; what patriotic harangues poured forth to rouse the Britons to deeds of valour, and urge them to preserve their dying freedom! By the rosy gleam in the west, I beheld the patriarchal druid standing at the upper end of the area, while

> "Loose his beard and hoary hair
> Streamed like a meteor to the troubled air,"

urging his silent auditors to repel their foes, or perish gloriously on the field of death. His garments shone with gold, and his robes were of many colours; around him stood the bards, each with his harp, while the stern chiefs leant on their long shields of painted wood and brass before him. Their breastplates of iron and wreathed chains gleamed duskily through the dim shades of evening; their two-handed swords hung by links of gold on their right thighs; the beautiful spotted skins of the wild stag, and the snow-white hide of the forest bull mantled their broad shoulders; and they shook in anger their brazen-headed spears. As he ended his speech, I heard deep shouts rise on the ocean-winds; the hills repeated the din, and the hollow valleys prolonged the sound of many voices; the harps of the bards

rung with the war-song of victory and renown; the neighing of steeds and the rush of chariot-wheels rolled in thunder round the mountain's brow, as the Celtic chieftains went forth in battle-array to conquer or die!

Not far from this place, where assembled the tribes in a deep and narrow valley completely sheltered from winds and storms, are to be seen a series of circular excavations in the ground, extending nearly the whole length of the glen; and in another neighbouring vale is found a similar line of hollows. These shallow pits follow each other at nearly equal distances, and I have no hesitation in asserting that over them were once placed the tents or booths of the aboriginal Britons; and that in these now lonely valleys were once situated two populous Durotrigian lowland villages. The hills above them on every side produced excellent pasture for their cattle; and on some of their declivities may yet be discovered, by the green embankments, the pens in which they were folded, and nightly protected by watchful herdsmen and their fierce dogs of true Celtic breed, from the ravenous attacks of prowling wolves and other savage beasts of prey. On the mountain above these wild villagers, oft enwrapt in ocean clouds and thick mists, sat their

chiefs and elders at the solemn council; and when the war-horn of hostile tribes was heard in the distant heath, they fled with their wives, their children, and cattle to the lofty bulwarks of defence,—their city of refuge on the adjacent cliffs of Flowersbarrow.

Happy were your days, ye savage rustics, in the time of peace! Children of true liberty, ye dwelt like the Indians beyond the western ocean, in careless ease and blissful freedom amid your beautiful forests, majestic groves, and verdant valleys; where Nature poured forth in wild exuberance her fruits and balmy flowers. Woods, mountains, fields, and rivers with their myriad tenants of beasts, and birds, and fishes, all were yours, free as the air you breathed. Your herdsmen and shepherds led their numerous flocks and herds to the daisied mountain's side, and the green meadows of the crystal river; they spent the day in athletic games and frolic gambols; they wove garlands of mingled oak and lilies of the valley for their loves, with whom they held sweet converse at set of sun by the moss-grown stone of remembrance, by the ancient tumulus o'er which the hawthorn showered its fragrant blossoms to the evening winds. Your dauntless hunters roamed the forest, and boundless heath,

where they gained ample spoil, and returned at nightfall to feast in their skin-covered tents and green-clod booths with their joyous families and friends; then was spread the banquet of shells, the herlas overflowed with nectareous draughts of hydromel, and the mead-horn of hospitality went merrily round by the light of the blazing oak.—Happy race! ye are now gone; and the place which knew you once, shall know you no more for ever! But the graves of your chiefs still remain, a lasting monument of a great and warlike people!

I remain, dear Frank,

Yours most truly,

SYLVATICUS.

LETTER LIV.

L—— Cottage.

MY EVER RESPECTED FRIEND,

IT is a singular fact, that the various remains of the druidical superstition connected with the polytheistical worship of the Celtæ in this county, are all situated on the sea coast, and near one of the ancient British trackways, from the Agglestone on Studland heath, to the circle and immense kistvaen on Gorwell hills. I have in a former letter, spoken of the only remaining stone of a Celtic temple on Whiteway farm,* near Lulworth; and shall now give you some

* In the early part of the last century, a stone coffin was dug up in a field belonging to this farm, containing the skeleton of a man and a child, and likewise a gigantic sword. Qy? was this a British warrior and his son? "What! Britons bury in stone coffins!" we hear our antiquarian readers exclaim with a laugh. I reply, yes; Britons did bury unburnt bodies in stone coffins, as I shall presently prove:—I mean the Christianized Britons, *after* the time of Constantine, of which, from among others, I here select one instance. In Mathern church was entombed, in 600, St. Thewdrick, king of Morganuck, or Glamorgan, who was slain in a battle against the pagan Saxons at Tintern, on the banks of the Wye. "The stone coffin," says Barber, in 1803, "containing the remains of St. Theodoric, was discovered some time since: upon removing the lid, the skeleton appeared perfectly entire, except a large fracture on the skull, which occasioned the death of the hero."

account of a journey or pilgrimage which, since my return hither, I took in company with two friends, to Pokeswell temple, the Portisham cromlech, and the circles of Gorwell; and which, to every lover of the most remote antiquities of his country, are replete with the highest interest.

The temple on Pokeswell hill consisted of a double circle of pillars, the bases of which, after a lapse of so many ages, only now remain. The inner circle is of very small dimensions, but there was a long and grand avenue of rocks on the eastern side, which led to the entrance;* while to the east and west was a double agger, or dyke, that joined an immense rampart running along the south side of the hill to protect the approach to this once-sacred High-place of superstitious worship. This southern vallum and ditch, which we have before noticed, is continued at intervals to the banks of the Froome, and again appears between Langton and West Chickerell. From this mount of sacrifice is a most extensive view to the north over the beautifully diversified hills and valleys of Dorset, in some places even to the limits of the county. As the eye turns to the

* "The Welch term for the right-hand seems to have some reference to the ancient superstitions of the Britons; it is *dehendaw*, or the south-hand; an expression which can only be true when we look at the east. The circles at Stonehenge seem to have a reference to the rising of the sun at the solstice."

south, the ever-toiling billows of the British Channel stretch out in wide and sublime expanse to

"Where the round ether mixes with the wave."

"O, who that climbs this mountain brow, and thence
Surveys the dread immensity of sea;
Oft wildly heaving, and oft sweetly lulled
To deep tranquillity by the soft hush
Of Summer, feels not pleasure, wonder, awe
Alternate, as in breeze, or gale, or storm.
He gazes on its bosom! On the waste
Of waters, rolling from the birth of Time,
The great and fathomless ocean, swathing round
As with a girdle this stupendous Earth,
The eye would dwell for ever! Every shore
The wave of Ocean visits: on it roams
Through the bright burning zones, where ardent gales
Cool their scorched pinions in it. Indian airs
From bowers of bliss, waft o'er its smiling face
Perfumes of Paradise; and round the poles,
Startling the eternal solitudes of snow,
The restless wanderer howls!"

Such were some of the noble prospects of the ancient druids, as they ascended from their ample and sacred groves of oak in the valleys beneath to this lofty temple of rocks. The eastern brow of this hill bears evident marks, from the earth-

works, inequalities of ground, and number of excavations, to have been the residence of the druids, the druidesses, the bards, and the ouates, and their attendants, who ministered at the holy place of divination and sacrifice. How often has the philosophic druid paced to and fro this shadowy avenue of rude rocks, wrapt in solemn meditations on the worship of the gods; or gazed from the sacred circle with upturned eye on the moon, as in the plenitude of her glory the star-crowned pilgrim sowed the wavering ocean with beamy gold, and attempted to decipher the glittering and mysterious characters written by the finger of the Most High on the azure scroll of the interminable heavens.* Then was heard in the valley below, amid his oaken bower entwined with the balmy honey-suckle, the wild harp of

* "If, therefore, that remarkable passage in Diodorus, lib. ii, where he relates what he had learnt from the writings of Hecatæus concerning a people called Hyperboreans, (because their island is more remote from the cold freezing north-wind) that has so often been cited by various writers as supposed to refer to the Britons, (though Diodorus names them not by *that name* here, as he does in other parts of his work:—and though one does not well know what to make of the part of the description, wherein it is said that they have a *double harvest* in each year), if that passage does really refer to *them* and to their druids;—then, when we find him saying that 'they have a magnificent grove, τέμενός: and a temple worthy to be spoken of adorned with many ἀναθήμασι, consecrated devotements, which is of a circular plan; and a sacred city adjoining inhabited almost entirely by harpers, who, without intermission, sing hymns in verse with melody; and that they have a language peculiar t themselves, but yet have connection with the Grecians, and particularly with the Athenians and Delians, (some of whom are said to have left ἀναθήματα, consecrated devotements amongst them inscribed with Greek

The young initiated bard, warbling the praises of some mighty chieftain in concert with the forest nightingale, who sweetly mingled her plaintive

letters); and that the moon is seen from this island, so as that it appears to have certain terrestrial projections visible upon it?"—if all this did really refer to the Britons, we can only conclude, perhaps, that the *double harvest* related to a reaping of both corn and hay in some of the more southern parts of Britain visited by the Phœnicians; and that the island had not been so entirely sequestered from the Grecians in the south-west parts as the Romans imagined. And with regard to the account concerning the moon appearing *larger and nearer to the earth*, and their being able to perceive certain *terrestrial projections on its disk*, we can only conclude, either that it imported no more than their taking more particular notice than other people of the comparative largeness of the horizontal moon *from the elevated situation of some of their sacred circles of observation*, (and because of its having its magnitude increased still more by the haziness of an insular situation), and their taking more particular notice than others of the fixed outlines of distinction between the shaded part of the apparent map so visible on its disk, and the bright parts; or else we must conclude, that they had a further degree both of optical and of astronomical knowledge, derived from the more learned first branches of mankind, than even Cæsar was aware of, and which they still cultivated with some degree of care."—*King's Preface to Munimenta Antiqua.*

O'Halloran, in his *Introduction to the History and Antiquities of Ireland*, vol i. c. viii. gives a different and garbled translation of the above passage from the Sicilian author, and asserts Ireland to have been the Hyperborean country there mentioned. "The island being compared to Sicily," says he, "is one great evidence, seeing that we know of no other in the European seas of such dimensions." Now Great Britain, which O'Halloran purposely overlooks, being so small, forming a triangle, is much nearer in shape to Sicily than Ireland, and therefore bears the closer comparison;—"and its lying opposite to the Celtæ, i. e. Britain, is a still greater:" the Celtæ here meant, were the inhabitants of Gaul, opposite to which Britain is situated, and not Ireland. And with regard to the moon, he declares that the ancient Irish were acquainted with the use of glasses and telescopes, and consequently the Irish druids could perceive very plainly the mountains and valleys in that orb; as Ith, the son of Milesius, first spied the Irish coasts by means of glasses, from the top of the tower of Braganza in Spain. Now, as it is impossible that the most powerful glasses can discover, though they may wonderfully magnify, that which lies so totally beyond the ken of human sight, as the Irish coast from the tower of Braganza, I do not believe one word of these unauthorized absurdities.

lay of love and sadness with his high-sounding notes of fire, that ever and anon imitated the rush of war-chariots mowing down with their iron scythes the ranks in fight, till they died away in the faint cries and wailings of the expiring, and rose again with redoubled sweetness, pealing the sonorous song of victory and renown.

It is probable, from the smallness of the inner circle on this hill, and there being no altar or cromlech near, that the wicker image of gigantic proportions, in which were inclosed a number of captives destined to feed the devouring flames, has been often erected on this spot.* And hither to these dreadful sacrifices, and other mysterious rites of blood, at which Pliny says, lib. xxii. c. ii. the British women went naked, but stained dark like Ethiopians by a vegetable juice,† resorted the Celtic population from all the neighbouring settlements, the fierce hordes who wandered with their cattle from place to place, and the warlike denizens of the invincible and once-mighty city of Durnium, or Maiden Castle; for, we know, that to be interdicted from the sacrifices of the druids was considered by the Cymry the severest

* Dionysius Halic, lib. i. p. 30, says that the Kelts sacrificed human victims to a deity, whom the Greeks called Kronos, and the Latins Saturn.

† These, no doubt, were druidesses.

punishment that could be inflicted on them. "An interdicted person," says a learned author, "was deemed both impious and wicked; all fled from him, and avoided his presence and conversation, lest they should be contaminated by the intercourse. He was allowed no legal rights. He participated in no honours."

But the day of thy visitation is past, thou high-place of superstition and blood! Thy temple is levelled to its foundations; and all thy priests, thy diviners, and bards have undergone a thousand modifications in the eternal changes of Nature! Thou art deserted and forlorn; no one approaches thee, save the simple sheep-boy that sits at even-tide on the rude bases of thy pillars, and whistles to the setting sun, unconscious and regardless of thy awful legend. No more from thy dim brow the death-flames of Beal on May-eve are seen ruddily ascending into the illumined clouds by the bark, as it skims the ocean billow, the festive, but dreadful signal light for other fires that instantly gushed upward from every hill-city, mountain, and village far as the wandering eye could gaze! No more the fierce-visaged warriors, with their brazen spears and painted bucklers, ascend thy steep acclivities to inquire their fate in battle. The druidesses thrid not thy lonely

avenue in mysterious fire-dances, crowned with garlands of oak.* The shout of worshipping multitudes ring no more around thy green-turf ramparts; nor shall the melodious tones of the bardic harp be ever heard again to dispel the silence that rests at summer eve on thy moon-light brow, or mingle with the wild music of the deep-mouthed winds when the dark wing of the wintry tempest sweeps thy lofty eminence, and the thunder-cloud rocks the foundations of thy crumbling temple.

But let us hasten on to the grand cromlech at Portisham. Our road led us over a considerable part of the Celtic coast-trackway, lined on each side with the tombs of ancient chiefs. On our right from the hills we saw the stupendous remains of Durnium, the capital of the Duro-trigians, with ramparts piled on ramparts; once crowded with habitations, and full of warlike multitudes; but now how lonely and silent! more unfrequented than the desert-surrounded ruins of Palmyra; than the crumbling magnificence of the hundred-gated Hekatompylos! From the British road of the hills a broad trackway is plainly to be perceived, that led up to its eastern

* The druids performed no ceremonies without the leaves of the oak. Maximus Tyrius calls the oak the Keltic image of the deity,

gates, once thronged with battle-chariots, with horse and foot, as the azure-tinctured chieftains led forth their shouting hosts to meet the sworded legions of the invading Roman.

After descending steep hills and crossing profound valleys, we at length discovered the Portisham cromlech. It is situated on an eminence surrounded on every side, except to the south, by an amphitheatre of other and more lofty hills. The scene has a savage and wild appearance.

> "A holy peace
> Pervades this moorland solitude. The world
> And all who love that world are far away!
> Nothing is heard but the sweet melody"
> Of mountain-lark high poised on cloud-veiled wing.

This immense altar seems to have originally rested on four upright stones, three of which have been thrown down: it is therefore now in a very inclining position, with a diameter of about ten feet the longest way, it being somewhat of an oblong shape. At some distance from it, to the north, is an amphitheatric hill, where thousands of spectators might be seated; and, as the altar originally inclined from a horizontal direction that way, enjoy a full view of the cord-

bound captive, as he fell, stabbed by the druid, on the cromlech. At a little distance to the south-east, is a barrow; and a little further in the same direction, a vast pillar of remembrance, more than ten feet in length, now fallen on the ground. There is also on the south side of the altar, and almost close to it, a bason or hollowed excavation, like those in the vallum at Stonehenge, of which King says, "Most probably they were designed to hold the blood of the victims, or at least as receptacles into which it was to be poured. And it is almost impossible not to bring to mind on seeing them, the curious description given by Homer of the rites performed by Ulysses; undoubtedly in compliance with ancient superstitious usages and ideas with which Homer was acquainted." On the brow of the hill towards Portisham, are a number of natural rocks lying in singular positions, and which I cannot but think were once made use of by the druids for purposes connected with the rites of superstition.

Who could stand beside this altar, and not feel the strongest emotions of interest? Who could behold this ponderous table-rock, and not be carried back, in delightful reverie, to ages of remotest antiquity? Who could look on it, and

not be reminded of that altar which Abraham erected on the lonely mount of Moriah; and on which he bound Isaac his son as a sacrifice, and lifted the knife to slay him? Who could view the fallen pillar of remembrance, and not think of the rock beneath which Jacob laid his head to sleep,—for such is the meaning of the passage, agreeable with the manners of the eastern people to this day,—and dreamt of the splendour-circled gates of paradise; and when he awoke, set it up for a pillar of memorial and anointed it with holy oil: and also of the twelve stones which Joshua drew from the bed of the Jordan, and set up as pillars of remembrance on the banks of that river? In Ossian, too, we read of setting up an immense stone, in commemoration of a victory obtained by Fingal, King of Morven. Above all, who can gaze on this rugged pile of rocks, without reflecting how many generations of men have passed away and become dust since they were erected on this blood-stained spot? how many nations have successively ruled these kingdoms? how many triumphant dynasties worn the island crown and vanished into nothingness? When we behold this rude monument of Britain's rudest days, we cannot but recal from the dim and misty visions of former ages the eve

of Beal, or Bealtine, the Celtic and Irish word for the sun; and which the Romans latinized into Belenus, and applied to the same deity, as appears from several inscriptions found on ancient monuments. Then on yonder wild heights to the east, rose the fires of May-eve; and here on May-day was the double fire kindled, betwixt which the men and beasts devoted to sacrifice were compelled to pass, one of them being killed on the cromlech and the other on the ground. Hence arose the Irish proverb "Itter aha teine Bheil"—*Between Bel's two fires;* applied to a person in such a dilemma, that he cannot tell how to extricate himself.

Again let us ask, who can view this altar and its pillar of memorial, and not be convinced that the druidical religion was established in this country by the Phœnicians and Carthaginians? Maundsell, in his account of the ancient Arphad of Scripture, the Ardus of the Greeks and Romans, situated in the country of the early Phœnicians, gives a description of an ancient Syrian altar, erected in a court 165 feet square, cut out of the natural rock, which King very plainly proves to be exactly similar to the British cromlech, and most particularly like that of Kits Cotty House, in Kent; "being" as Maund-

sell says, "composed of four large stones,—two at the sides, one at the back, and another hanging over all at the top." Nor was this altar without its sacred pillars, standing in the inner angle of the court. Armstrong, in his history of Minorca, whose inhabitants in the earliest ages are spoken of for their antiquity, describes the remains of various cairns and cromleches, which the native islanders call to this day the altars of the Gentiles. Wall's Views in Syria and Palestine, from the drawings in Sir Anslie's collection, exhibit many curious remains of solid rocks and stony mountains, cut into shapes and erections of massy stones for the purposes of superstition. It certainly is most rational to conclude, that the philosophical and theological system of druidism was of too refined principles to be the offspring of the original and Nomadic Britons; and who are so likely to have been its parents as those colonizers of Britain, the Phœnicians and Carthaginians? Cæsar positively asserts, that the druidical system originated in Britain, and from thence extended into Gaul; and we well know that this island was the grand seminary for the study of its profound mysteries by the youth of the continent. Turner says, "The state of Britain was inferior in civilization to that of Gaul, and

therefore it seems more reasonable to refer the intellectual parts of druidism to the foreign visitors, who are known to have cultivated such subjects, than to suppose them to have originated from the rude unassisted natives."

Let us compare the manners of the druids with those of eastern nations, and more particularly the cruel rites of their worship with those of the Phœnicians. Abraham himself seems to have been a druid of the early and pure worship; for we are told that when he dwelt at Beersheba in the plains of Mamre, he planted a grove there, and called upon the name of the Lord. To this grove or sacred wood Abraham and his numerous family repaired at stated times, to offer sacrifice and worship the true God. In the Hebrew it is *he dwelt among the oaks of Mamre;* and the Syriac renders it, *the house of the oak.* This is a curious and striking similarity to the customs of druidism. St. Jerome tells us that this grove of oaks was standing in the days of Constantine, and worshipped with great solemnity. Sozomen goes so far as to assert that there was a grand festival and mart held beneath these oaks every year, to which all the surrounding nations of different religions, Pagans, Jews, and Christians, resorted; and that Constantine hearing of it,

wrote to Macareus, Bishop of Jerusalem, and the other bishops of Palestine, to destroy all the altars, images, and every vestige of idolatry which was erected there. This was immediately complied with, and a Christian church built on the spot.

Let us next refer, my friend, to the worship of the Phœnicians or Canaanites. Do we not continually read in the Bible of sacred groves, of high places for burnt-offerings, of the sacrifices of the dead? And did not the Canaanites cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire to Moloc or Saturn? and this betwixt two fires, as the British captives did on May-day?

The Celtic Beal, or Bealan, is surely that most honoured of all the gods of Palestine—Baal, or in the plural Ballim, the Belus of the Chaldeans: and it is more than probable that the sun was worshipped under this name; for Josiah, willing to atone for the sins of his father Manasseh in worshipping Baal and all the host of heaven, put to death those priests who burnt incense unto Baal, to the moon, and to the planets, and to all the host of heaven. He also took away the horses that the kings of Judah had given to the sun, and burnt the chariots of the sun with fire. Again: Peor, another of the Phœnician idols, had

groves planted and altars erected to him on the tops of mountains. It is also certain that his priests offered human sacrifices; and what is still more horrible, they ate of the victims which sacrificed. Thus we read, "they joined themselves unto Baal-Peor, and ate the sacrifices of the dead." "The religion of the Britons and Gauls," says a modern author, "was of a fierce and sanguinary nature. They who were afflicted with severe disease, or involved in dangers or battles, sacrificed men for victims, or vowed that they would do so." The King of Moab offered up his son on the wall of the city, to procure a victory which he never obtained.* In the Psalms we read "they offered their sons and their daughters to devils; and shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and of their daughters, whom they offered unto the idols of Canaan; and the land was defiled with blood." Agamemnon sacrificed his daughter, "the blooming Iphigenia," on the altar of Diana at Aulis:

> "The price of winds, of a dear-purchased gale
> To bear him on to Troy."

Tertullian, who was a native of Carthage, asserts that this inhuman practice was continued by the Carthaginians long after they had been subdued

* 2 Kings, iii. 27.

by the Romans, even down to the proconsulship of Tiberius, who hanged the sacrificing priests on the trees that surrounded their temples. Hurd tells us, on the authority of Diodorus, "that when Agathocles was going to besiege Carthage, the people seeing the extremity to which they were reduced, imputed all their misfortunes to the anger of their god Saturn; because that instead of offering up to him children nobly born, he had been fraudulently put off with the children of slaves and foreigners. That a sufficient atonement should be made for this crime, as the infatuated people considered it, two hundred children of the best families in Carthage were sacrificed, and no less than three hundred of the citizens voluntarily sacrificed themselves; that is, they went into the fire without compulsion."

How many fires were lighted up by the Britons in the oaken groves of the sacred Isle of Mona, when they invoked their gods for victory over the exterminating arms of Suetonius; and hoped to immolate hundreds of the Roman soldiers on their burning altars and in cages of wicker! Did not Balak take Balaam "up into the high places of Baal, that thence he might see the utmost part of the people;" and did he not build for him seven high altars on the tops of seven mountains,

and prepare seven times seven sacrifices? And were there not at Stonehenge seven high altars of oblation, called by Dr. Stukeley thrillithons, on which the victims were laid, after having been prepared at the great hearth-stone or altar, at the east end of the inner circle? It is said of Moses, that he rose up early in the morning and builded an altar under the hill, and set up twelve pillars; thus we always find that near the Celtic temples and altars, there are also rude pillars erected which have been consecrated to the deity. What are the commands of God to the Israelites? "Ye shall utterly destroy all the places wherein the nations, which ye shall possess, served their gods upon the high mountains, and upon the hills, and under every green tree. And you shall overthrow their altars, and break their pillars, and burn their groves with fire; and you shall hew down the graven images of their gods, and destroy the names of them out of that place."

Why are the Celtic temples circular? Because the sun, the refulgent and natural image of the deity, cannot be more properly represented than by the figure of a circle. This figure, I conceive, was substituted in the hieroglyphics of the ancients as the artificial emblem of divinity; and

consequently became the figure of the open temples, the earliest places of religious worship. Their circles or disks, called Haminichem, or sun-images are mentioned in the Bible; and to this day the circle is the symbol of royalty, power, glory, and dominion. Again: that magnificent temple at Avebury, whose grand circle, surrounded by a noble rampart, consisted of a hundred enormous stone pillars, which enclosed two other double circles, in one of which was a lofty central pillar of solemn inauguration more than twenty feet in height, and in the other a vast cromlech. It had, moreover, two great avenues, one of which more than a mile in length, consisted of a hundred stones on each side, leading in a south-east direction to a hill on which stood another double circle, which King thinks to have had imposts on its pillars, and were the altars of oblation; the western avenue also consisted of two hundred huge stones, and half way the avenue on the north side was another immense cromlech; while at its termination stood a gigantic rock-pillar, surrounded at a distance with numerous tumuli. Here we perceive another emblem of the divinity universally received,—that of the seraph, or flying serpent, whose expanded wings were the symbol of the ether. In this stupendous

temple, the destruction of which can never be sufficiently regretted, were united entire the complex figure of the circle and the serpent, the original intent of which is explained by Bercher, from a piece of great antiquity in the Phœnician language. "Jove," says this venerable fragment, "is a figured circle, from it is produced a serpent: the circle shows the divine nature to be without beginning or end; the serpent,—his Word, which animates the world and makes it prolific; his wings the spirit of God, which gives motion to the whole system." Further: the very name of the British chariots is allowed to be derived from the Phœnicians; while their coins are very similar to those of the eastern nations, being convex on one side, and concave on the other, and stamped with the rude impress of various wild beasts.

I cannot, therefore, but firmly believe, that the whole system of British druidism was brought to these shores and disseminated among the wild inhabitants of this once happy isle of spirits,* by

* Faetzes, who represents the fortunate island as British, observes, like the Poorauns of the Indians, "that the souls of the dead are reported to be carried thither; and that on the shore of the ocean which washes the island called Britain, men subsist by fishing who are subject to the Franks, but pay them no tribute; because, as it is reported, they transport the souls of the dead to the coast of Britain, which is reckoned among the islands of the blessed, and the habitation of deceased persons conveyed thither by these fishermen."

the roving Phœnicians, and confirmed by their successors the Carthaginians.

After leaving the Portisham altar we crossed a steep valley, in which we found two small tumuli near to each other. These may have been the graves of two favorite bards, as near each of them were placed two large upright stones. Taliesin's tomb is said to have had four stones placed round it. In the county of Armagh there is a tumulus called Vicar's Cairn enclosed with a circle of stones, on some of which are engraved lines of unequal length, that are considered to be an Ogliam inscription. On a mountain not far from the castle of Caerphilly is a stone pillar, called Y Maen hir, eight feet in height; close to its base is a mound, and on the pillar an inscription in Welch, which signifies *Mayst thou awake:* "from which," says Grose in his Antiquities, "it is inferred to be a funeral monument."

Quitting the valley, we found ourselves in a short time at the circle of Gorwell. Alas! this temple too has been destroyed, and little more than the fragments remain, which form a perfect circle of more than seventy feet in diameter. It appears to have had no outer circle, and the surrounding rampart has been, no doubt, erased by the plough. This fine relic of by-gone ages,

is situated between Kingstone and Gorwell, on the summit of an eminence that commands a prospect at once interesting and grand. To the south is Gorwell, with its gentle stream clear as the azure it reflects, meandering through its deep and quiet vale beautifully skirted with hanging woods, once the sacred haunts of those who ministered at this high-place of the gods. Above that secluded glen frown the double entrenchments of a camp, or hill-city of the ancient Britons, from whence they must have enjoyed an immense prospect of sea and land. To the north and west appears in long perspective another valley, far wider and more luxuriant, through which the Bride, amid flower-clad fields of eternal green and ample groves of the richest verdure, wanders on to the neighbouring ocean. Beyond its dark green shades the lofty hills in the vicinity of Bridport tower to the sky in proud majesty, and the marble-tinted cliffs of Lyme stretch along in wavy beauty and sublimity, the rock-girt limits of the mighty deep; while the blue mountains that form the faint outline of Devonia's land, whose sun-tinged precipices resting on the far-distant horizon of this inimitable picture of Nature's panorama, softly blend with the exquisite tints of the radiant occident!

This temple of Gorwell had also its avenue of pillars, some remains of which are still visible, terminating in a most singular druidical monument. It consists of a narrow tumulus of very considerable length, gradually rising to the end, which lies south-east from the circle.* Here are two huge stones still in an upright position, more than seven feet high and six broad; another of the same dimensions has been thrown down, and there are the remains of a fourth in the same line. A ponderous fragment lies on the top of the barrow, which is, no doubt, a part of the altar rock that has been partially removed and broken to pieces. These stones are composed of huge congeries of conglutinated flints. Some person has very lately excavated nearly the whole length of this peculiar barrow, and shamefully left it, I am sorry to say, in a mass of ruins. Thus, ere long, every vestige of antiquity will vanish from the kingdom.

"Alas, for-gone Antiquity!
Its holy and mysterious temple, where
The sybil spread abroad her hoary hair,
And spoke her oracles divine, her home,
Is crumbling into dust!"

* The long graves in Gwanas; no one knows to whom they belong, nor what is their history.—*Welch Archæology.*

In one part of the excavation, a cist or kistvaen has been opened; an enormous stone seems to have covered its mouth, but its contents remain a secret. It is much to be regretted that the person who opened this curious barrow, has not made the public acquainted with what it contained. Every discovery that tends to throw the least light on British antiquities, must be hailed with pleasure by every man who pretends to the smallest degree of taste, intellect, or mental acquirement beyond the grovelling perceptions of the untaught clown.

At a little distance from the temple to the north, and on the brow of the same eminence, is a singular entrenchment, of which no antiquarian has yet taken any notice, nor mention been made in our County History. The vallum is low, but it incloses a considerable space. Fortunately it has, as yet, been spared by the plough, and is in perfect preservation. This I conceive to have been a tribunal-seat of the druids, and where they met at the regular stated periods to decide on public and private controversies, sitting as the supreme judges,—so great was their power and influence,—in all cases of homicide, inheritance, and boundaries. Here they appointed rewards to the deserving, and punishments to the guilty.

Here the victors among the British youths, who contended in their various athletic and manly games, received from the hand of the chief the envied prize of their vocation. Here the bard received the oaken garland and the flower-wreathed harp of pearl and gold, as the gloried reward of his transcendent muse. To this day, we have the shadow of these open courts in the Assembly of the Keys, on a mount in the Isle of Man; and in the Hundred-courts held in several parts of this county. This judgment-seat is in the shape of a trefoil, and the entrance is due east. During all the public ceremonies of the druids, they stood gazing on the sky to the east. This was the case, I believe, with all the heathen priests who lived westward, at least, of the Hellespont. This seems to have relation to that tradition so current among all nations, of some illustrious personage being born in the east, who should reform all abuses, and reign as Priest and King in peerless splendour over the whole world. It is also very singular, that "Preserver, or Saviour, is represented by a sort of trefoil with a long stem in the Egyptian hieroglyphics." *

From the amplitude of the temple, cromlech,

* Vide Supplement to the Encyclopædia Britannica,—article, *Egypt*.

and tribunal at Gorwell, the lofty and commanding situation on which they were placed, the deep and abrupt valleys that encompassed it on every side thickly mantled with impervious woods, and from the neighbouring lofty hill-city of Abbotsbury that commanded a view of nearly all the mountain-fortresses in the kingdom of the Durotrigians, I am strongly inclined to believe that, as the Roman legions under Vespasian advanced in their conquests to the west, this was the last strong retreat of the druids in this part of the country. Here they made their last determined stand, and fought with dreadful resolution for their altars and their gods: but the invincible eagles of Vespasian marched onward, like a devouring flame; Durnium, though encircled with dyke surrounding dyke, with rampart heaped on rampart has fallen, and Eggerdon is taken by the conquerors of the world! The dark cloud of war rolls onward to the west; it thickens around the fatal hill of Gorwell. See you not the distant flashing in the morning beam of the light-armed auxiliaries of Vespasian, as they march over the northern hills: they are followed by bands of foot and cohorts of horse, completely armed for the field. Now descend to the plain the pioneers, and those who level the forests for the march of

the army, followed by the heavy-laden carriages. Now again the mountain flames with armour-light! Titus and Vespasian are seen on the glittering heights, surrounded with the select guards of foot and horse. The plumes of the mail-girt riders wave like the boughs of the storm-shaken forest: around them float the silken banners of victory, and behind them flock the commanders of the cohorts and the tribunes. Now brightly gleam in the sunlight the ensign-compassed eagles of gold, the worshipped gods of the Roman warriors, and the bright globe of Augustus, the proud symbol of the conquest of the world. The Buccinœtores and Tubicines march behind, and the pealing voice of the Roman trumpet comes sweetly floating on the mountain winds. A legionary host forms the rear, and the hills are covered with the lightning of their arms. The tide of battle rolls down the steep, like a thunder-cloud, to the valley of the Bride!

Hear you not the axes ring, and the lengthened crash of falling woods on the lovely banks of the Bride? The brave Morini gather together in fierce array; the dreadful chariot-drum of the Britons roars through the sacred groves of Gorwell. Their horsemen rush into the valley, and the charioteers descend with the speed of

eagles the declivities of the hills. The battle yell echoes to the shores of the ocean. The druidesses and sacred virgins, with torches of fire and their dishevelled tresses streaming on the winds, rush in frantic fury amid the ranks of death and urge their countrymen to the fatal struggle! The battle continues with determined obstinacy: nor is it, perhaps, too much to assert that it was on this eminence where the renowned Titus, the immortal conqueror of Jerusalem, who fought as a military tribune in this part of the island under his father, rushed in desperate valour upon the furious Britons, and greatly rescued Vespasian from the most imminent peril!

At length the Roman genius prevailed, and bore every thing before its irresistible might! The druidess, the diviner, and the bard lay weltering in their blood amid the pillars of their beloved temple, and the charioteer fell beneath the carnage-clogged wheels of his own chariot: the routed Britons fled across the narrow valley of Gorwell, and its waters were turned into blood, and choked with the corses of the slain! The fugitives ascended to the hill-fortress of Abbotsbury; but Vespasian rushed onward, and it fell like the other cities of the Britons before his all-conquering sword!

A solitary druid escaped the scene of slaughter,

and fled towards the wild regions of Cornubia; as he crossed yon lofty hills, that now seem to melt in the glowing embrace of the evening clouds, he cast back a farewell look to this hill of death, to the temple of his gods, to the hallowed bowers of his own dear-loved valley-home, and with streaming eyes thus deeply sighed:—Ye once-blest shades, for the last time I behold your blood-stained bowers! Ye must now become the dwelling of the proud stranger, the foeman of Britain, and never again shall the foot of druid press yon holy hill! No more shall the smoke of the evening sacrifice ascend to the setting sun from thy summit, nor the harp of the inspired bard be ever heard again in thy polluted groves! Farewell, my country; eternally farewell, ye delightful haunts of my youth! The holy relics of our gods and our chiefs shall survive the stranger's ravages, and live the dark memorial of our religion throughout the long successive ages of Time; but the dimness of the past shall rest like a thick cloud for ever upon them, and all record of those scenes that have been acted there of pleasure and wo, be lost in the unfathomable gulphs of eternal oblivion!

I remain, dear Frank,

Yours, &c.

SYLVATICUS.

LETTER LV.

L—— Cottage.

My Dear Friend,

Through your late removals and my illness, our correspondence has suffered a longer discontinuance than it has ever done since its commencement. In that interval important events have occurred, and I have strange news to tell you, which you shall have in one important sentence,—I am married. And who, and what is the wife you have chosen? I hear you ask. I will tell you, for the little story of Maria is somewhat romantic. She is the orphan daughter of the late Jerome W——, an attorney residing in the city of London, who possessing an excellent practice, once lived in great affluence. His prodigal liberality led him to keep an open house and free table for numerous pretended friends, who had seen better days, and through various contingencies were reduced to extremely narrow means; till his own finances became so limited, that he was compelled to resign his equipage, and lessen his establishment. His lady, who was a widow and of a most

respectable family, and said to have been excessively fond of gaiety and display, died in giving birth to Maria; and such was the husband's extravagant sorrow at her loss, that he almost immediately fled from his house, leaving all his property and business to the care of servants and specious friends, and in his paroxysm of grief wandered without object or care. During his bewildered rambles, he visited Flintshire in North Wales, the residence of his father, who was a Roman Catholic, and kept a priest in his own family. Before he reached his father's abode, his horse fell with him over a rock, and the animal broke both his fore-legs. Mr. W. received considerable injury, and it was long ere he could be persuaded to return to his own house in London. After a lapse of several months, he at length summoned resolution sufficient to revisit his once happy and convivial home. On his arrival, he found every thing in confusion and misery. His property had fallen a prey to the rapacity of servants and the most cruel of relatives. His office was deserted, his clerks fled, his practice lost, and the treacherous friends of his prosperity left him a prey to anguish and despair!

Overwhelmed with misfortunes, he soon died broken-hearted, in indigence and obscurity,

weeping over his infant orphan, the friendless and unconscious Maria. He was descended of a very ancient warlike house, the ancestor of which came into this kingdom with Canute, the celebrated Danish monarch. This legend has been handed down from generation to generation in the family, the representative of which was Maria's father; whose arms, which I have in my possession engraved on an ancient silver seal, are thus emblazoned when in their proper colours. An ancient shield, field argent, charged with a bend sinister sable, between two scarps dancette. Crest, a stag's head or, issuing out of a coronet with diamond-pointed rays, argent. Here I cannot help digressing a little, to show by the following quotation from a modern publication, how idle is the vaunted pride of birth, and how little the noblest families in this kingdom have to boast as far as regards their real antiquity. "The families of the ancient Saxon and Norman race, chiefly by the mutations of time and of state, are either become extinct, or reduced to the lowest verge of fortune. Those few therefore whose descent is traceable, may be carried higher than that of the present nobility; for I know none of these last, who claim peerage earlier than the reign of Edward I. about the year 1295.

Hence it follows, that for antiquity, alliance, and blood, the advantage is evidently in favour of the lowest classes. Could one of those illustrious shades return to the earth and inspect human actions, he might behold one of his descendants dancing at the lathe; another tippling with his dark brethren of the apron; a third humbly soliciting from other families such favours as were formerly granted by his own; a fourth imitating modern grandeur, by contracting debts which he never designs to pay; and a fifth, snuff of departed light! poaching like a thief in the night upon the very manors possessed by his ancestors."* This verifies the Spanish proverb, that "In a hundred years time, princes are peasants; and in a hundred and ten, peasants grow princes."

* The daughter of King Offa, Queen of the West Saxons, begged her bread from door to door with a little girl on the continent, and perished miserably.

A credible traveller reports, that he saw at Constantinople a descendant of the emperor of the family of the Paleologi, who wore the imperial diadem when the Turks conquered it, a common porter ready to run upon any errand for a small reward. It is a curious coincidence, that in the village-church of Landulph, in Cornwall, is the following inscription on a plate of brass, fixed in a mural monument near the altar: — "Here lyeth the body of Theodore Paleologus, of Pesaro in Italy, descended from ye Imperyal lyne of ye late Christian Emperors of Greece, being the sonne of Camillo, ye sonne of Prosper, ye sonne of Theodore, ye sonne of John, ye sonne of Thomas second brother of Constantine Paleologus, the 8th of that name and last of yt lyne yt rayned in Constantinople, until subdued by the Turks; who married wt Mary, ye daughter of William Balls of Hadlye, in Souffolke, Gent, and had issue 5 children; Theodoro, John, Ferdinando, Maria, and Dorothy, and departed this lyfe at Clyfton, ye 21st of Jan. 1636."

The absurdity of vain-gloriously displaying the genealogical tree, is most apparent in this,—that the further it is traced back, the nearer it comes to the same original root from which all mankind have sprung. But perhaps there are still some who, like the proud Duke of Somerset, pity Adam for his lack of noble ancestry; forgetting that God himself was his immediate Father. Far more agreeable to this sublime origin of man are the opinions of the Chinese, than those imbibed from the feudal system of the barbarous nations of the north:—"There is no notion of inequality in China," says the author of *The Travels of a Philosopher*, "but that of *talents* and *merit*. The Chinese have not even a name in their language to express the puerile distinctions of *noblesse* and *plebeian*, men of family, and men of mean birth; these are no where to be found but in the jargon of *new* people, still barbarous, who having forgot the common origin of all men, insult and debase the whole species; the nation whose government is ancient, dating its commencement with the first ages of the world, is sensible that all men are born equal, all brothers, all noble."

"Les hommes sont égaux; c'est ne point la naissance,
C'est la seule vertu qui fait la difference."

About the period of Mr. W's demise, his father lost nearly the whole of his property by becoming a bondsman for a worthless relative, who fled to the continent loaded with the spoils he had purloined from the credulous and unfortunate. His other, and now his only son, resided in Dorsetshire; and though living on a slender income, no sooner did he hear of his father's losses, than he sent for him and his aged mother to come to the village where he lived. He received them with open arms, and kindly provided for their necessities. He now learnt the death of his unhappy elder brother: and with a heart glowing with the tenderest benevolence, resolved, if possible, to find out his little female orphan, Maria. To that end, he issued advertisements and offered rewards for her discovery. After considerable expense, much trouble and anxiety, she was found at the house of a person of the name of Dawset, on Blackheath, who is supposed to have shared the ample spoil of her father's property during his absence. From thence she was conveyed to her kind and loving uncle in Dorsetshire, who proved to her, during his short life, a second father.

Mr. Thomas W. was married to a woman of a strange compound of character, made up of con-

trarieties. Generous to a fault to strangers, her house was ever open to the unfortunate and unknown. She fed and clothed a little wandering Welch boy for two years, and at length sent him at much expense to his friends. She took in a poor ragged beggar-boy, who strolled about the country friendless and homeless, and brought him up till he was old and hardy enough to obtain his living as a sailor.* Yet with such amiable qualities, she was parsimonious and niggardly to those of her own family. The most industrious woman out of doors in things with which she ought to have had no concern, and the most indolent, slovenly, and careless creature that ever existed in her household affairs; always saving with a miserly hand useless trifles, and squandering wastefully large sums; suffering every thing to go to ruin, and putting off every necessary domestic duty to a convenient season, which unfortunately for those about her never arrived. She was one of the most loyal beings in the empire,—a perfect heroine; who would

* It is pleasing to add, that in after years this youth returned to the place where he had been so kindly treated; and full of gratitude, found out in her age and indigence, his former benefactress. He belonged to a man of war: he made a will in her favour, and went back to his ship. Soon afterwards, he fell from the rigging on the deck, and was taken up lifeless; but by some means, of which I am ignorant, she never received the slightest advantage from his death.

not have hesitated, had occasion required, to have entered the lists of chivalry, and died in the ranks fighting for her beloved sovereign; though she resolutely lived in open defiance of his laws, and was one of the greatest and most daring smugglers on the coast! With such an economist for a wife, it is no wonder that Mr. W's affairs soon became in a deranged state, to improve which he took a small farm, and speculated deeply in illicit trade. Mrs. W. became the very queen of smugglers. Every day she regularly mounted her milkwhite palfrey, attended by three or four dogs, and scoured the adjacent cliffs and shores to give warning to the contraband merchants on any appearance of their foes, and to hail the approach of outlawed vessels crossing the English Channel from the islands of Guernsey and Jersey. Her husband purchased a ship for the purposes of smuggling, and she actually herself took the command, made voyages to France, and returned with cargoes of forbidden goods. In one of these perilous adventures, she took Maria with her to Cherburgh; and on their return, they were in danger of shipwreck in a storm in the West Bay, betwixt Portland and Lyme. The vessel was shortly afterwards seized, and with it Mrs. W. lost her captainship.

Mr. W. survived his brother but a few years, and at his death poor Maria became a second time an orphan. Thus far I have given you a brief history of my wife and her fortunes;—it henceforward becomes identified with the vicissitudes of my own.

A short time previous to our marriage, I experienced a very narrow escape from drowning. We were both at Weymouth; early in the evening I had to cross from the old town to Melcombe. Being in haste, I turned with full speed an angle of the narrow street, and ran down an opening, which I imagined led to the drawbridge; but what was my consternation and alarm to find, that in less than a minute I had leaped from the quay, and was plunged over head and ears into the sea. I could not swim, and although the change was so sudden and astounding, I had recollection sufficient beneath the waves to know my perilous situation, and I mentally bade adieu to all things beneath the sun. It was, however, so ordained by an ever watchful Providence, that a female living near the spot, saw me run by, as she stood at her door, and heard my fall in the water. She shrieked for help, and a sea-captain passing at the time plunged instanter into the waves, caught me by the hair, and held me firmly in his grasp.

Other help soon came, and we were both dragged up the side of the quay on dry land. Had the tide been on its ebb, it would have been impossible for me to have been saved. How can I be thankful enough for the wonderful mercies of my God! I was led with the loss of my hat, in a dripping condition, to the house of a friend of Maria, who received me with a state of mind much easier to be conceived than expressed.

I am, yours truly,

SYLVATICUS.

LETTER LVI.

L—— Cottage.

My Dear Friend,

Since my return hither, my early friendship with the Rev. J. Banister has been renewed with increasing kindness on his part, and I frequently pass a pleasant day in his library, which is well stored with valuable books. You will be somewhat surprised when I tell you that I have been paying my devoirs to Madam Thalia as well as Melpomene. Yes, I some time ago wrote a Drama in five acts, interspersed with songs and comic scenes. My friend went through the piece with me, and we carefully revised and corrected every scene, fitting it, as we conceived, for representation. I had been persuaded by a gentleman, who read the piece before my return hither, to put it into the hands of a Mr. Simmons, an actor of Covent-Garden, who, he said, was a man of honour and integrity. I followed his counsel, and transmitted it by a friend who went to London some time since. After waiting a tedious period, attributable, perhaps, to the destruction

of the theatre by fire, I received the following letter.

"Sir,

I have to ask your pardon for my long silence, but business must plead my excuse. I fear in the present state of the Theatre, I shall not have an opportunity to present your play to the Managers. I am very sorry, as I am well convinced it would succeed. I will send it to you immediately, excuse haste.

I remain, Sir,
Your's, &c.
SAML. SIMMONS."

Excuse this brevity, for I am unwell; my next epistle shall be longer.

Yours sincerely,
SYLVATICUS.

LETTER LVII.

L—— Cottage.

ALAS, my friend, what new scenes of distress open upon me! The management of Mrs. W. since the death of her husband, has hurried on her affairs to a ruinous climax. True to her character, she is one of the most honest women in the world; and where she owed a trifling obligation or a farthing, was punctiliously strict in the discharge of her debts; but strangely infatuated, and blind to the real state of her circumstances, she has been, it is now discovered, almost ever since the death of Mr. W. in the constant habit of borrowing various sums of money of her neighbours, from the squire to the clown, which it was impossible she could ever repay.

This legal robbery, for I can call it by no better name,—no sooner became generally known, than demands poured in like a flood upon her. She was arrested; every thing she possessed was seized and sold; she was thrown into prison, and her numerous creditors will never receive five shillings in the pound. Poor Maria, by this sad

failure of her aunt, has lost an excellent house, garden, and fields, which should have fallen to her on the death of this her relative; but which being leasehold only, were taken with the rest, and ultimately sold to the lord of the manor for a sum far short of its real value.

Poor Maria! I am sorely grieved on her account. Her aunt in a prison, herself as "women wish to be who love their lords," on the verge of being confined, and I must shortly be compelled to forsake my village-home, my quiet cottage sweetly embosomed in woods and groves, for the hateful, unfeeling world, and still more hateful stage! Nor do I suffer alone: my friend is even in greater affliction than myself, as you will perceive by the following:—

"4, *St. Vincent's Parade, Hotwell, Bristol.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I received your letter soon after my return here from London. I am happy to say that the news you have heard respecting my Chancery suit, I can confirm: it has ended exactly as I could have wished. I desire to be thankful to that gracious father, who has been better to me than my fears. As to my dear Mrs. Banister, I am sorry to send you only dismal tidings. She is sinking rapidly to a premature grave, and feels herself drawing very near her end. Her mind is quite

tranquil and resigned; her resignation is indeed very consoling to all about her. My own feelings you, my dear friend, can better judge of than I describe. My spirits are exceedingly agitated and I am unfit for every thing. Remember me kindly to ——, and your father and mother; may you, they, and myself meet where there will be no tears or death. These awful warnings should make us live for eternity. I hope you do not live without daily prayer; that if you should die young, you may be prepared for a dying hour and a happier world. I do not expect to return to W—— for three or four weeks. I have business to settle in London, which I was obliged to leave when I hurried hither; I therefore expect to be there in May for a short period, at No. 27, Fish-street Hill.

I remain, my dear friend,
Your's to serve,
J. BANISTER."

But in the midst of all my troubles I fly to the Muses, and find consolation in their sweet society. As a proof that I am not unmindful of my poetical talents, I send you the following poem.

THE VISION OF ST. JOHN.

What prophet-bard, what sacred hermit sits
Beside the desolate island's caverned rocks,
O'er which the giant palm-tree's evening shade
Waves to the freshening breeze? The sunlight spreads,

In its departing pomp, a golden hue
Upon the feathery branches, as they fan
The mighty-visioned seer, filling the air
With a delicious coolness; and the locks
Curls of the holy anchorite, that stream
Like a bright silvery ensign on the winds.

Loud on the sun-enlightened tor doth scream
The mountain-eagle, and the sea-mew's voice
Echoes along the island's lonely cliffs.
The prophet of th' Apocalypse dwells there
In exiled solitude. But glorious shapes
People that blessed isle; and seraphim,
Clothed in the pomp of immortality,
Await his nod, turning the savage rocks
And serpent-haunted woods to Eden bowers
In full beatitude. Visions sublime,
And forms unlike to aught in earth or sea
His sight bedazzle; while all Heaven reveals
Oraculous its dreadful mysteries,
And round him its terrific glory flings!

The dewy darkness of the evening falls
On sea and shore; but there is One that stands
Beside the seer in awful beauty decked,
Whose form, transcendently divine, doth all
The sons of men surpass. The rays of heaven
Enshrine his god-like face, where spot or taint
Of earthly imperfection ne'er was found.
His hyacinthine locks shaded a brow
Such as nor Titian nor famed Guido drew

In their sublimest flights: his eye outshone
The morning's azure star, and on his cheek
The rose that blossoms round the Tree of Life
Before th' Eternal Throne, its blooming spread
His wings displayed the rainbow's deepest tints,
And, circling him, the carbuncle's red glow
With diamond fires a mingled halo burned.
A gush of glory o'er the dark rocks streamed,
Till, like the orient when the ruddy morn
Breaks in her thousand dies, they blushed with light.
He waved his amethystine plumes aloft,
And from them shook a flood of starry gems,
Filling with rich perfumes th' embalmed air.
Such flowers as clustered o'er the bridal bower
Of Adam in his sinless paradise
Rose round that hallowed spot: and still, 'tis said,
Blossom, and pearl, and gem beneath the moon
Mingle their emerald gleams and blushes sweet,
But fade ere morning dawn from mortal sight.—

Hark! what rich tones
Burst on the stillness of that holy isle?
Strains far more solemn than the thunder-swell
At midnight heard amid the Alpine glens,
When all beneath the clouds is silent gloom
Deeper than are the winds along the skirts
Of mighty forests, when the storm walks forth
In all its indignation,—yet more sweet
Than the wild song the far-off river sings,
Amid its gray rocks, to th' unclouded moon;
More musically plaintive than the breeze

That through the yew-tree boughs at summer eve
Sighs o'er the new-made grave where beauty lies,
Come o'er the prophet's ear, till his full soul
With ecstacies is rapt!

The spirits of blessedness are on those clouds
That gather round his head: their harpings swell
In unison divine, till sea and earth
With the deep Hallelujah of the skies
Resound triumphantly.—And now the roar
Of twice ten thousand thunders rolls along
The hollow firmament. The clouds divide,
And as the lightning from their shattered skirts
Streams harmlessly upon the prophet's head,
Heaven in its unimagined pomp unfolds
And gives its glories to the upturned eye
O' th' great Evangelist.

And now there came
A rider on a steed of giant mould,
White as the snow on Ararat's untrod steep:
Pawing the clouds, as down the concave bright
He bore the warrior of mysterious name,
One of the fabled coursers he did seem
That draw the sun's proud chariot, while the light,
The thunder-light he from his glittering mane
Shook most refulgently. The FAITHFUL ONE
Who him bestrode, a dreadful falchion grasped;—
The burning brand of Fate, that down the heavens
Came wavering like a lava-track of flame.
His eye was the red torch of war, that seemed

A bickering comet in its devious course;
His brows, enwreathed with many sunbeam crowns,
His high dominion spoke. His vesture, dipt
In smoking blood, streamed on the troubled air
Like a deep-crimson banner o'er the ranks
Of white-horsed warriors in his dreadful train.
In flaming characters upon his thigh,
Each one a blood-star, written is his name,—
THE MIGHTY LORD OF LORDS & KING OF KINGS!

A seraph voice amid the skies is heard
That sounds from pole to pole.—"Gather yourselves
Together, all ye children of the sun;
Ye eagles of the cliff whose drink is blood,
Ye screaming vultures of the desert, haste;
With all the fowls of heaven that skim the air
On iron pinion, to the feast of death!
The banquet of the host in battle slain,
The solemn supper of the gore-stained dead
For you is now prepared. Howl, ye grim wolves,
Forsake your dens and snuff the tainted air!
Rejoice, ye tigers of the mountain wolds;
Up from the river's reedy banks ascend
Ye spotted leopards; haste ye shaggy bears,
And meet in horrid convocation,—meet
To rend the armour from the steel-clad chief,
And mangle with your tusks the mighty dead,
To lap the oozing blood of warrior-men,
And gorge the flesh of captains and of kings!

On rushed the mighty vision; dark the skies

Were filled with dust and smoke. The awful voice
Of sevenfold thunders mingled with the yell
And shout of battle, and the fearful cry
Of death, defeat, and flight. The heavens were wrapt
In sheeted flames of vengeance! Onward rode
The sun-clad conqueror in resistless might,
Down trampling all his prostrate foes in blood!
Hell from beneath, in her dark lurid fires
And horrors unimagined, yawned to sight,
And in their fall received them! Deep laments
And wailings terrible mixed with the song
Triumphant and the harpings now that rose
Seraphical, amid the whirlwind's swell,
In mystic chorus from the victor's host!

Adieu, my friend! Where I shall be when next you hear from me, God only can tell. My home, my dear-loved home must soon be a stranger to me, and death only, perhaps, will put a miserable period to my wanderings. Pity my untoward destiny, and believe me, in sorrow and joy, to be

Most sincerely yours,

SYLVATICUS.

LETTER LVIII.

L—— Cottage.

DEAR FRANK,

SITUATED as I now was, it forcibly occurred to me that with the little money I had remaining, and my ability in scene-painting, I might collect a company, take a town, and become Manager. This I proposed to Maria, and she readily assented to my plan; agreeing with me, that as I was wholly unacquainted with any other profession or business, it was the only thing I could engage upon with any hope of success. I will not give you a tedious detail of the trouble and the various journeys which I took, to secure a respectable town in which to commence my managerial career. Suffice it to say, that I at length obtained the borough of S—— in D——shire, hired the place usually appropriated to the purposes of a theatre, had it handsomely fitted up with an elevated stage and boxes, and what is more,—paid my carpenter's bill before the work commenced, with a certain number of weeks' rent in advance. I then bought a quantity of canvass, and began

painting my scenery. But I should have told you, that during my rambles to procure a town, I met with an old actor of Mac Lear's, usually called by the performers Daddy Gray. He had for some time been a sort of manager himself; but grown weary of his post, he gladly promised with all his company to join me as soon as my preparations were complete. About the same time I also engaged two or three other performers from a little itinerant party, whose captain-general's name was Buttler. This man was notorious for his love of playing great parts; and to show his versatility of genius, used to double the part of Father Philip in *The Castle Spectre*, with Earl Osmond, forming altogether one of the richest burlesques ever displayed on the stage. From his company I engaged two young men, and a Miss Whitefield, daughter of the late Mr. Whitefield of Covent-Garden theatre, and likewise a man for my door-keeper, &c.

Whilst I was busily engaged in painting my scenery, and the theatre was getting ready, this very Mr. Buttler, an exceedingly mild, fair-spoken gentleman, came to S. and entreated me to engage him and his wife, as all his company had forsaken him; boasting much of his abilities as a scene-painter, I foolishly complied with his im-

portunities, kept him a week, paid all his expenses at the inn where he slept, and advanced him three pounds to bring his wife and luggage to join me at S. But somehow or other, this sweet-spoken worthy, this choice hero of both the sock and buskin, took it into his head never to return with either his wife or baggage, and absolutely forgot ever to repay the three pounds he so kindly borrowed of me. Just at this time, too, I fell into the company of a young man of dashing appearance, a native of the neighbourhood, possessed, as I was informed, of considerable property. He had just set up as manager at a town not very far distant, having formed a company principally from private theatres in London. I soon began to listen with complacency to his proposals for uniting our interests, and to commence a joint-stock concern, or theatrical partnership. This was all prematurely concluded, without time for inquiry or reflection, over a bottle of wine, and the day fixed when both companies were to enter the town, and begin the campaign in full strength.

At the appointed time, all the different parties arrived from widely remote districts; and as widely remote did they appear in their manners, dresses, and characters. Indeed you might have supposed, as they entered the town, that they had

been a motley troop of pilgrims going to Canterbury. It would require the inimitable pencil of a Hogarth to describe with accurate effect the assembly of actors and actresses on the appointed day of rehearsal. First, there was my partner, or brother-manager, who I now,—alas, too late!—discovered had been apprenticed to a tailor in the same town; and who, without the most distant pretensions to theatrical ability or experience of any kind, in a mad fit of love or jealousy, or both, a few months ago rashly quitted the shopboard, and became a fame-hunting actor. Having some property bequeathed him by his deceased father, he resolved to lay down the thimble and shears, and shine forth in all the pomp of stage regality. Then there was his first actress, with the romantic name of Miss Clementina Arabella Percy, a thorough-bred cockney, all feathers and flounces; and as her sweet person was to be set off with more than ordinary splendour on her first appearance among strangers, she wore a string of mock jewellery around her neck, composed of glass and copper. This young lady, with little gray eyes and a face shaped like one of the old British war-hatchets, aspired to all the principal characters in tragedy, and could not think of playing any second part to Miss Whitefield, although the

latter had been nearly as many years on the stage as the former had months. Miss Whitefield, who had all the exquisite consequence of a little woman, with an expressive countenance, a pair of fine eyes, and considerable merit to boot, agitated to a violent degree the single feather that drooped gracefully over the roses of her left cheek, and protested she should consider herself entitled to lead the business in the line of heroines, as she had been engaged by me for that purpose. Next, there was another of the tailor-manager's ladies, whom he had brought down immediately from town to play the first old women. Mrs. Kamble had once been very handsome, and was still a good-looking female; she had been a singer, but her voice, like her lovers, had cruelly forsaken her, and her acting, though chaste, was of the tamest and most insipid kind. But here was a second tremendous collision: I had unluckily engaged from the company of old Daddy Gray another female, who expected this business. This, my friend, was a Mrs. Carey,* whose daughter I had also employed as a dancer. Nothing could form a greater contrast in person and appearance, than did Mrs. Carey and her daughter with Mrs.

* The real mother and sister of the great Mr. Kean, who at that time was a poor strolling actor like his relatives

Kamble. They looked wretchedly poor, meagre, and half-starved; the tailor's lady sleek, plump, carminely blooming, and decked out in the finest London style. She turned up her "honourable nose" at Mrs. Carey, insisted upon playing all the first characters in her line, and threatened, if refused, to appeal to a magistrate; having played in the town some years before, she brought one of her old gallants, a limb of the law and a person of influence in S., to back her pretensions, and we were compelled to assent to all her demands, and throw Mrs. Carey on the shelf. As for her weak-minded daughter, she seems to be totally unfit for any thing under heaven, except to read novels and romances.

But our difficulties did not end here. There was a clashing among the male branches of the community. Two young men, whom I had engaged, were always wrangling and sticking up for principal parts. One of them had scorbutic eyelids, a pug nose, and flaming carotty locks; the other was very short, indifferently straight about the legs, with a knowing cast of the eye; yet they both thought most favourably of their attractions, and each one proclaimed himself the only proper representative of the youthful heroes, both comic and tragic, in the company! Add to

these, the brother of Southey and his wife. Yes, Frank, I assure you one of our performers was the brother of the Poet Laureate! The infatuated young man had been an officer in the army, and served for a time in the Peninsular war; but his commission, the prospect of preferment, and the regard and countenance of his family, all were sacrificed to an unconquerable passion for the stage. This younger Southey, with a croaking voice, a spare figure, and meagre countenance, fancies he shall soon rival a Cooke and a Kemble in the Osmonds and Macbeths of the stage, holds his head as high in the theatrical world as his brother does in the poetical, and hugs himself in the delightful idea of being able ere long to retaliate all the neglect and scorn with which the Laureate treats him.

Southey, too, had a rival among us in his line; and that was a little short fellow who was always hopping about the stage like a magpie, and repeatedly visiting every corner of it during the time he was on. Not content with aspiring to tragedy, he also sung comic songs, and chopped out the sentences betwixt his lank jaws like minced hay from a machine. Besides these, we had a rough, jolly old fellow of the name of Kent; an ancient stager,—a very hack of the old school.

He had been discharged by my co-partner, but he notwithstanding followed him to S. and fastened on us like a leech. Nor could we shake him off: he was a Free Mason, and as there was a numerous Lodge in the town who all took his part, we were compelled to support him; and not him only, but his son too, a little bluff, stupid, impertinent boy, whom his old corpulent father had drilled with hard exercise into Young Norval, and went about the country exalting him as an inimitable Roscius, although it was purgatory to hear him recite a single speech. This old fellow came professionally in contact with Daddy Gray, who was another of the old school, the height of whose enjoyment seemed always to be, to have on a new spangled dress. Tenacious to the last degree of his share of acting, he would not give up a line to old Kent; who with a voice as gruff as thunder, and the weather-beaten phiz of a jolly tar that has twice made the circumnavigation of the globe, used sometimes to storm and rally him, but all to no purpose.

With a company formed of such opposite and incongruous members, where so many jarring interests were always clashing with each other, you cannot, I am sure, be surprised to learn that envy, and bitterness, and malice, and all kinds of

evil-speaking were dreadfully predominant. Nothing but disorder, mutiny, and the vilest scandal was heard on every side; the townspeople, ignorant of the villany of many in the company, at first took part against the managers; who, grossly libelled by those they supported, were greeted with hisses whenever they appeared on the stage. But the receipts of the house would not pay half the salaries of such a host of claimants. My money was now all spent; I had paid to the last farthing; and the house was only kept open by the credit of the other manager, who was known to have some property in the neighbourhood. Things could not last long in this way. We now divided the company, and sent a part to perform at another town, where we had the private theatre of the French officers, prisoners of war on parole, who very handsomely accommodated us with the free use of the house and scenery. But even this would not support our expenses; while the perpetual anxiety and toil I underwent, and the quarrels of the performers, rendered my life one continued scene of perplexity and misery. This was not relieved by the conduct of my partner, who having credit for what liquor he wished, sat from morning to night singing ridiculous songs, and drowning in rum and shrub all sorrow for

his losses: he regularly went reeling to bed, totally regardless of the company or its concerns.

I now visited my home, and staid with Maria a few days, who was very ill. On my return, I found that in my absence my brother-proprietor had collected the performers at his lodgings, and made the greater part of them drunk: he set them fighting, so as to require the interference of the constables; while in a fit of jealous fury, one of the actresses had pretended to stab herself with a carving knife, and absolutely did wound her bosom so far as to cause the blood to flow through her gown, but was prevented by some one present from doing herself any further violence. At sight of the blood, the tailor-manager screamed himself into hysteric fits, and kept bawling for his dear mamma to save him from being murdered.

All this was a death-blow to every remaining hope of success; and I determined to cut the business as short as possible. The performers took their benefits: some were successful, others totally failed. Amongst the rest, old Kent, who had played no character of consequence during the season, securing the patronage of his Masonic brethren, had a house overflowing in every part, and cleared a considerable sum. My night came, but my old fortune followed me: it was no

benefit to me. I, who had laid out so many pounds in the town before I received a single farthing in return, who had lost all my money in the place, who had regularly paid not only my own bills, but, free of every legal obligation, those of many of the performers; I, who had toiled through so much anxiety, who had done all that was possible to be done to give satisfaction, had not even the expenses of the night in the house! I need hardly tell you, that I quitted the liberal town of S., my noble partner, and the company, as soon as possible; happy, though pennyless and stripped of all I took with me, dresses, scenery, and books, to escape from such a mass of baseness, ingratitude, and falsity.

I am, my dear Frank, in storm and in sunshine,

Yours unchangingly,

SYLVATICUS.

LETTER LIX.

Thorney, Isle of Ely.

My Dear Friend,

You will, no doubt, be surprised to see my present address. Far removed indeed am I from you, and all whom I hold in the bonds of affection. I arrived here last week after a long and miserable journey, some account of which I shall now give you. About five weeks after the close of my late unprofitable speculation, Maria was safely delivered of a son. At that time all the money we possessed in the world did not amount to twenty shillings, and I had no friends of whom I could borrow; and even if I could have found any willing to lend, it would have been of little avail, as it was impossible for me to remain any longer at L. Poor Maria, to conceal our distress, was compelled to dismiss her nurse at the end of a fortnight, and our small moveables of value began to disappear with awful rapidity. We concealed our poverty, for those by whom we were surrounded, would only have triumphed at our distress, and upbraided me for my misfortunes.

I lingered at home day after day, unwilling to leave my wife and new-born infant desolate and almost unprotected; while the ill-disguised reluctance which Maria felt to let me go, shone forth in tears from her eyes, as she repeatedly urged my unavoidable departure.

At length the dismal day arrived; but it required a more than common fortitude firmly to sustain the trial. Unconscious infant, little didst thou think what thrilling sorrow, what pangs of fear, what yearnings of hope thy father felt for thee, as he stooped to imprint a farewell kiss on thy soft cheek; what prayers he breathed from his inmost soul, as he hung o'er thy unbroken slumbers, and bade thee a mournful adieu. Poor babe, it may be said of thee thou wert nursed in the cradle of adversity, and baptized with thy parents' tears. Maria accompanied me on my journey six miles. She could go no further: a weeping infant claimed the presence and tender caresses of its unhappy mother. That firmness of mind which had borne her strongly up to the present moment, now totally forsook her, and she fainted in my arms. I bore her to a little rivulet which flowed near the spot, and sprinkling her face with water, brought her to her senses and a full consciousness of her misery. At length she

found herself relieved by a fresh flood of grief. I recalled to her memory the imperative necessity of our parting for a time, and the strong claims which a husband and a child had on her fortitude. She calmly replied, "For your sake and my infant's, I will return to my desolate home; and though I shall eat my scanty crust in solitude and sorrow, I will clasp my babe to my aching bosom, and hope for better days. Yes, his infant smiles shall cheer me, and be my comfort in your absence. Go: I am firm now. God Almighty eternally bless and preserve you from every danger. May you soon obtain a comfortable situation: delay not to write, and oh ——"

She would have said "farewell:" the word died on her pale lips, and she turned from me to go. To have replied on my part, would only have lengthened the misery of parting; with a last embrace I rushed from her, and went on my way in anguish inexpressible. I dared not look back, till I had passed many miles of the dreary road. From a rising ground I then cast a lingering look towards my native hills, and the dark green woods that surround the valley of my home. What were then my feelings? can words do them justice? No, my dear friend; you may imagine, but no one ever can express the sorrows of my heart at that moment.

On my arrival at the next sea-port, I was about to embark on board a vessel for Portsmouth, that being by far the cheapest mode of travelling; when, as I was standing on the quay, a lieutenant and part of a pressgang surrounded and dragged me away to their rendezvous. This was extremely vexatious; but I soon found that I was arrested on strong suspicion of being a French officer who had violated his parole of honour, and was compelled, before I could obtain my freedom, to send for a gentleman of the town to identify me. This was sufficient to procure my liberty, and I immediately embarked for Portsmouth. The passengers consisted of hogs, calves, sheep, and poultry, old and young women, men, and children. There was much mirth and more noise among such a strange medley. About midnight, the old women in the cabin, as it was termed, made a general tea; the captain joined them; the song, the vulgar joke and laugh went round, and the facetious captain entertained his passengers, as he sipped his brandy-flavoured tea, with some of the most outrageously lying tales and wonders, both serious and comic, that were ever heard on sea or land.

To free myself from such disagreeable society, I went on deck. It was a lovely night; scarce a breeze ruffled the slumbering waters and the

full moon as she pursued her silent course in majestic beauty through the boundless depths of the heavens, enshrined the ocean in quivering splendour. The stars, like the golden thrones of the seraphim, shone around her on every side, and seemed to pay homage to her superior light. Not a sound met the ear, save the soft rippling of the waves against the sides of the bark, save the faint-sigh of the midnight breeze amid the flagging sails; except when the occasional burst of laughter issuing from the light-hearted crew in the cabin, disturbed the holy tranquillity that reigned around. My homeward-veering thoughts bore me in that still hour to my own loved cottage. O, what is the soul but thought, divested of dull matter? I saw my wife weeping over the couch of her sleeping innocent; I saw all things as though I had been there; I consoled, I cheered her, and thought she answered me with a pleasing hope of better days yet to come. From the depths of immensity a voice seemed to say, as I gazed on the sky, "I am everywhere, and my protection is omnipotent!"

My spirit returned from her wanderings swifter than the wing of the lightning, and I marked on one side of the vessel the cliffs of the Isle of Wight towering aloft in dim and shadowy

majesty, and bathing in the silvery moonlight their gigantic summits; and on the other the gloomy walls of Hurst Castle situated on a narrow rocky peninsula of the low coast of Hampshire. Within that dreary and rugged fortress, the ill-fated Charles I. for a considerable period was closely immured. Hurried from the Saxon towers of Carisbrook in yonder island, he was conveyed across these narrow waters and received on the drawbridge of that castle, as the heavy gloom of a winter's stormy evening, dark emblem of his fate, lowered on the melancholy scene. Its unfeeling commander, as Sir Thomas Herbert, groom of the chamber to his Majesty, informs us, "received him with small observance; his look was stern, his hair and large beard were black and bushy, he held a partizan in his hand and (Switz-like) had a great basket sword by his side. Hardly could one see a man of a more grim aspect, and no less robust and rude behaviour; some of his Majesty's servants were not a little fearful of him, and that he was designed for mischief." Unhappy Charles! great were the sufferings thou didst endure within those dismal walls! The wintry tempests and surly waves howled around thy prison towers, and dark and cheerless was thy unkingly abode. But what were the fury of

stormy elements and the gloom of winter that clipped thee round, compared to the tempest within, the agony of the mind! A king dethroned, thy subjects in rebellion, thy armies annihilated, thy regal state exchanged for the miseries and deprivations of captivity, thy authority usurped by ignoble strangers, the wife of thy bosom and thine innocent little ones driven far from thee, and the fearful dread of secret assassination perpetually haunting thee by day, and filling thy dreams with horrors; being, as thou truly observedst, immured "in a place fit for such a bloody purpose."

Shall I complain, I mentally exclaimed, when a king has endured so much? How light, how unworthy a sigh are my sufferings compared to his! Let me murmur no more; but learn to bear with perfect patience those trials I am destined to undergo, and better days may ere long succeed.

The morning now began to dawn in all its beauty: a light breeze sprang up, gently curling the green waves; the white mists were gracefully lifting their fleecy veil from the stupendous heights of the opposite island; and the fine woody landscape on the coast of Hampshire stretched in one continued prospect of diversified beauty. To the east were seen, like a wintry

forest, the masts of an immense crowd of ships, from the moving citadel of war armed with its triple tier of thunder-breathing cannon, to the humblest craft of the sea-faring merchant; above all the sun arose in the strength of his glory, and gave increasing animation and beauty to the prospect.

Arrived at Portsmouth, I the next day applied to the manager of the theatre for a situation. The company belonging to that circuit is considered respectable, and I was anxious for the sake of my wife and child to obtain employment so near my home. But I failed in my purpose, and continued on my journey towards Brighton. On my way I turned aside to view Portchester Castle, the ancient Roman station of Portus Magnus, and the Caer Peris of the Britons. Its venerable Saxon tower, or keep, through all the changes of time and vicissitudes of war, has remained nearly the same it was when first built, and is a majestic and noble remnant of antiquity. I soon reached Chichester, the Regno of Richard of Cirencester. But if Holwood Hill, according to the commentator of that Itinerary, be the capital of the ancient Regni, which certainly accords with the manner of the ancient hill-cities of the British, then I am inclined to think with Dr.

Stukeley, that Chichester was the Mutuantonis of Ravennas, situated on "the hither or near Antona." As a proof that this was a Roman station, a large inscriptive stone was dug up here in 1723, which Dr. Stukeley thinks belonged to a temple built by Cogidubnus, a prince of that part of the Dobuni which had submitted to Claudius; and who, in compliment to the emperor, called himself TIBERIVS CLAVDIVS COGIDVBNVS.* This temple appears to have been dedicated to Neptune and Minerva. Dr. Stukeley thinks this prince ruled, under the emperor, over the subdued or civilized Dobuni, his own tribe, and had the Ancalites, Bibroci, and Segontiaci, whose country lay between the Dobuni and the Regni, bestowed upon him.

This city, laid in ashes by Saxon and northern

* Dr. Stukeley says, "I suppose him to have been a Regulus of the Dobuni." This, if correct, is a further proof that Chichester could not have been Regno: because we are told by Dion Cassius, lib. lx, that Aulus Plautius having put to flight Caratacus and Togodumnus, sons of Cunnobelin, part of the Boduni (the same people as the Dobuni) who were subject to the Catuellani, submitted to the Romans; and the name Cogidubnus, or Cogiduvnus, *Coc o Dubn* or *Duvn*, (vide *Baxteri Glostar. in verbis Cogidumnus et Dobuni,*) signifying expressly in the British language PRINCES DOBVNORVM.

This same author gives the inscription on the stone at Chichester as follows:—"Neptuno & Minervæ Templum pro Salute Domus Divinæ ex Auctoritate Tiberii Claudii Cogidubni Regis, Legati Augusti in Britannia Colegium Fabrorum & qui in eo Sacris (or Horrorati) sunt, de suo Dedicaverunt Donante aream Pudenti Pudentini Filio."

pirates, Cessa, son of the warlike Saxon chief Ella, re-edified and made it the seat of his kingdom, which during the Heptarchy was called south Saxony. Its cathedral was built by Bishop Selfrid, in the reign of Richard I. It is not large, but the spire is lofty and elegant. In the interior is a handsome monument erected to the memory of the immortal Collins, the greatest boast of this ancient city. But the cloisters of the cathedral were to me the most interesting spot; for here, I have been told, the unhappy Collins often wandered to and fro in his abstracted musings, which rendered the place to me doubly hallowed.

O, how many lofty spirits, how many superior minds have fallen victims to adversity, and perished miserably either in abject want or madness! O, let the misfortunes and sorrows of others, so far superior to myself, teach me humble resignation to the mysterious dispensations of Providence. Shall I complain that no powerful patron did ever condescend to extend a fostering hand to my lowly Muse; or even vouchsafe one approving smile on her productions? that the world listens not to the simple notes of my oaten reed, when the first productions of an author who could produce that beautiful *Ode to the Passions*

totally failed of success? when the sale of his second work was not sufficient to pay for the expense of printing it? Ill-requited bard! a noble pride animated thy bosom, when the bequest of a relative enabled thee to return the copy-money to thy bookseller, and,—like Sir Walter Raleigh with his manuscript of the second part of his *World*, the former portion of which like thy beautiful Odes had been left on the warehouse shelves by an ungrateful public,—thou didst commit the remaining copies with indignation to the flames! But thy miseries are ended; thou art at rest, and thy name has survived the ignorance and ingratitude of thy times!

But to return to myself. Hearing at Chichester that there was a company performing at Midhurst, I went thither to see if I could obtain in it a temporary engagement. I arrived there on a Wednesday evening early enough to attend the performance. But as I have before given you descriptions of itinerant acting, though I verily believe this was the worst ever seen, it is necessary that I should be very laconic in my criticisms on the Midhurst company. It consisted of two managers, Messrs. R. and M., the one a shoemaker and the other a barber, with their wives, who were sisters, and co-heiresses to the rags and

sticks of some deceased veteran of the wandering sock and buskin. To these were added a little old man without energy, voice, or talent; a young one about four feet nine inches in height, with one of the most vacant and expressless countenances ever beheld; and here again I found the mother and sister of Kean, the man of mighty name at Drury-Lane.

The substitutes for scenery were two pieces of canvass, vilely daubed over with the likeness of nothing in heaven above, nor in the earth beneath, said to have belonged to some French officers who used to perform plays for their amusement. The piece I saw represented, was *The Honeymoon*. The barber-manager attempted to support the part of the Duke Aranza; and his sister-in-law—who, by the bye, was a very pretty woman,—the haughty Duchess. But really such acting, such struttings, such readings, such pronunciation, I never witnessed before. The dignity of the superior characters was all sunk in the native meanness of their representatives, and the comic ones most grotesquely caricatured. In short, they were players, "not to speak it profanely, that neither having the accent of Christians, nor the gait of Christians, pagan, nor man, did so strut and bellow, that I thought some of Nature's

journeymen had made men, and not made them well, they imitated humanity so abominably."

Disgusted with the company, I the next day left Midhurst, but not till I had surveyed with a melancholy pleasure the castellated mansion of Cowdrey. It had been in times past a splendid seat, but now stands in blackened ruins, having been destroyed by fire. The towers and part of the walls are still perfect. The south-east tower appears in good repair, but the other parts have a naked, mouldering, and melancholy appearance. The face of the great clock above the grand entrance still remains, unconsumed by the devouring element. I will describe to you what it has been from Dr. Stukeley, who likewise visited Midhurst, which he conceives to have been the Roman station Mida. "At Midhurst is a fine old seat called Cowdrey, belonging to the Browns, Viscount Montacute. It stands in a valley encompassed with lawns, hills, and woods thrown into a park, the river running underneath. 'Tis a large house of stone, consisting of one court. The hall is ceiled of Irish oak, after the ancient manner. The walls painted with architecture by Roberti, the statues by Goupé, the staircase by Pelegrini. The room at the end of the hall is of Holbein's painting, where that

famous old artist has described the exploits of Henry VIII. before Bulloign, Calais, his landing at Portsmouth, his magnificent entry into London, &c. In the rooms are many excellent pictures of the ancestors of the family, and other history painting of Holbein's, relating to their actions in war. The whole circuit of rooms above stairs are stately and well furnished, adorned with many pictures. There is a long gallery with the twelve Apostles as big as the life. Another very neat one wainscoted with Norway oak, where are many ancient whole-length pictures of the family in their proper habits, which is a very elegant notion. There are four history-pieces, two copys of Raphael's marriage of Cupid and Psyche, several old religious and military paintings from Battle Abbey. The road to Midhurst to us appeared Roman, and therefore strengthens the supposition of its being Mida." This account of a castle, written more than a hundred years ago, is now both curious and interesting, especially to those who have seen the present ruins, in which not a vestige remains of its former beautiful paintings and splendid furniture.

Having left Midhurst, it was evening when I reached Shoreham, which I passed through with the intention of continuing my journey that night

to Brighton. I had, however, walked only two miles of my last stage for the day, when I was overtaken by a number of men armed with sticks and bludgeons. They followed close at my heels for some minutes, till suddenly pushing forward, several of them crossed the road before me, and the whole formed round me a ring with their uplifted weapons, while one of the stoutest instantly seized me by the collar. I now began to be considerably alarmed, not knowing what was their design, or for whom they might have mistaken me. For the first moment I thought they had been robbers; but when I observed their numbers, I considered that to be very unlikely, and concluded they must be smugglers, who had mistaken me for an informer or some vigilant excise-officer, and were going either to murder me, or revenge themselves for some supposed injury. Thus unpleasantly situated I demanded to know who they were, who they supposed me to be, and what authority they had to stop me on the King's highway. But the only answer I could obtain was, that I must go with them. Two others then violently grasped both my arms, and began dragging me back. Resistance was totally useless; I therefore told them if they would release me, I would quietly

submit to their will; otherwise they should wholly carry me, for I would not be dragged. They then relaxed their hold in a great degree, but still kept a most profound and mysterious silence to all my inquiries. Believe me, Frank, I did not feel very comfortable at this time, not being able to conceive what could be their motive or design, or how this strange affair would end. It began to get very dark, and I was hurried across fields, through bye-lanes, through mud and water, in a most unpleasant manner; at length I perceived we were entering a town, which relieved me from the most horrid of apprehensions.

I soon found that I had been brought back to Shoreham, and was presently led to the press-gang rendezvous. Here I learnt that I was again arrested under an impression that I was a French officer, who having broken his parole, was in search of the means for transporting himself to the opposite coast. It seems the penetration of these worthies had been considerably aided by the somewhat warlike appearance of a pair of sky-blue pantaloons; and secure in their own judgments, they were disposed to treat me with but little ceremony. Seeing they intended me no better accommodation than their wretched

guard-house afforded, I insisted on being instantly taken, late as it was, before a magistrate. This was not granted me without considerable hesitation; but probably apprehensive of the consequences of a mistake, they reluctantly complied, and I set off closely guarded as before for the residence of the neighbouring justice. A short time served to convince him that I was no Frenchman, and I was dismissed from the custody of the fellows who had brought me back to Shoreham; but the only recompense I could obtain was, that they were to conduct themselves with civility, and see me safe back again to the town, which place I reached overcome with anxiety and fatigue.

The next morning I arrived at Brighton, but found the theatre closed and the performers all gone. I could not afford to waste any time at this town, and can therefore give you no account of it; nor if I could, would it afford you much pleasure. Brighton, like most other watering-places, is the resort of the gay, the idle, and the dissipated. Few of these have any regard for the sufferings and sorrows of their fellow-creatures, or any thing to spare from the sordid indulgence of their own sensual gratifications for the relief of indigent merit. In short, Brighton seems to

have little to interest the antiquarian, and less the man of sentiment and feeling.

From thence I set off to Lewes, the county town of Sussex, where I found a respectable company performing, some of the members of which received me in a very friendly manner; but I could obtain no engagement there, the manager having no room for a new actor. I soon left Lewes for the metropolis, and was directed to Finch's theatrical register-office, as the certain place of obtaining a situation. I arrived a second time in London after a long and weary journey. What occurred up to the time of my arrival here, you shall know by my next epistle.

I am, dear Frank,

Yours,

SYLVATICUS.

LETTER LX

Thorney.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

ON my arrival in Town, I became acquainted with a young man, an actor, who like myself was out of a situation, and who by his polished manners and friendly behaviour won me much to his company. I had to wait two or three weeks before a suitable situation in any provincial theatrical corps offered itself, during which time we visited together several public places to me of great interest, particularly Westminster Abbey and St. Paul's. Nor was I scarcely less struck with the vastness of Westminster Hall; the largest building in the world whose roof is unsupported by pillars. I could not but reflect on the different magnificent and awful scenes, which have been performed at remote periods within these walls. Here the gallant, the undaunted patriot, Wallace, the deliverer and glory of his country, was placed in a high chair, and decorated with a mock crown of laurel before his unjust judges,—the abject

tools of a wily monarch's unbounded ambition. Thronging crowds flocked hither to behold him, and here he was basely condemned to die, with accumulated tortures, the death of a traitor. Here many parliaments have been held in full and solemn state; and here, in 1399, Richard II. who three centuries after its first erection by Rufus, in 1097, re-edified it and built a grand gateway, was cruelly deposed by the aspiring Bolingbroke. How thronged with the greatest nobles of the land, was this hall on that solemn occasion! Mitres, and coronets, and crowns caught the rays of the sun through those windows, and cast a dazzling light on every side. On that day how rung the sonorous voices of furious and contending warriors of regal blood; what proud swellings of heart, what ambitious desires filled the daring Bolingbroke when in that day of tumult he here seized the sceptre of England, and York pronounced the fatal words "Long live Henry, of that name the Fourth." I cannot but drop a tear for injured majesty, as I behold the meek Richard advancing from yonder entrance, with the officers bearing the imperial crown before him. How calmly does he resign the diadem to which he was born, and which till now he had worn, into the usurper's hands.

"I will undo myself:—
I give this heavy weight from off my head,
And this unweildy sceptre from my hand,
The pride of kingly sway from out my heart:
With mine own tears I wash away my balm,
With mine own hands I give away my crown,
With mine own tongue deny my sacred state,
With mine own breath release all duteous oaths:
All pomp and majesty I do forswear:
God pardon all oaths that are broke to me!
God keep all vows unbroke are made to thee!"

Within these walls, too, where so many new-made sovereigns have appeared at their inaugural solemnities invested with the sacred regalia of dominion, and kings have been unmade, the mock trial of Charles I. took place in January, 1649. Here sat the patient monarch, placed as a culprit at the bar of his own judgment-hall, and meekly received the sentence of death from his traitorous subjects. From that portal what splendid processions of regal pageantry have passed, amid shouting multitudes, to yonder venerable Abbey! What magnificent coronation banquets have been served up before a long line of kings within these walls, who, since the Norman conquest, have swayed the sceptre of Britain! What an assemblage of rank and beauty, the

pride and glory of these western isles, have from age to age met in this hall at the solemn feast! What a flood of light from sparkling diamonds, mingled with the love-inspiring radiance of still brighter eyes, illumined this saloon of gorgeous revelry! What a refulgent display of massy vessels of silver and gold, exquisitely wrought, appeared on the loaded tables! What a crowd of nobles, in their richest robes and gem-decked tiaras, bowed around the island-king, whose imperial diadem, as he sat enthroned in god-like state and splendour, shone like a clustre of the brightest stars! Then rang the hall with shouts and joyous voices, as the Champion of England, clad in panoply of gleaming steel and plume-crowned helmet, advanced through yonder portal on his white charger, and at the flower-strewed foot of the throne, or dais, flung his gauntlet in defiance to the foes of his royal master, daring to combat whoever should presume to deny his royal titles.

I paid a visit to the parish church-yard of St. Ann's, Westminster, to find out, if possible, the grave of Theodore, King of Corsica. Alas, it is undistinguished! Scarce half a century has elapsed since, monarch of a day, thou wast committed to the earth, and thy bones have been

already dislodged from their resting place:—a fresh tenant occupies thy narrow house, and thy dust helps to cover the mouldering remains of some humble mechanic! Born of an illustrious house, he learnt the arts of war under the ambitious Charles XII. of Sweden. He was afterwards unanimously called to the throne of a savage, fickle, ungrateful, but oppressed people. He accepted the offer of a crown from the deputies of Corsica, and in 1736 arrived at Aleria in that island, on board of a ship of 24 guns, carrying English colours. This ship was accompanied by two other vessels laden with provisions and ammunition, consisting of fourteen thousand sacks of grain, six pieces of brass cannon, twenty thousand muskets, bayonets, and other implements of war, fourteen thousand uniforms, an equal number of shoes and hats, and a chest full of gold, containing one hundred thousand sequins. He was received as a tutelar angel, conducted to Corte, the capital of the island, and in a general assembly of the most illustrious of the kingdom, elected king of Corsica and Capraja, under the name of Theodore the First.

But short was the glory of this hour. After performing prodigies for the improvement, advantage, and liberty of his people, after becoming

the wonder of Europe, he was grossly slandered and reviled by the malignant Genoese, who had, previous to his arrival in Corsica, been long the tyrant masters of the island. His perfidious subjects revolted, and his friends and allies forsook him. In this time of adversity, danger, and trial, he boldly but rashly resolved to call a general assembly. With an air of fearless grandeur and noble intrepidity, that causes a just terror to succeed an ignorant audacity, he informed the Corsicans that, seeing the succours did not arrive which he had so long expected, he was resolved to go and solicit them himself; that in the mean time he would choose able persons to govern the kingdom in his absence. He exhorted them to keep to their duty, and renew no more the infamy of their rebellions; for otherwise, he would quit them for ever, and acknowledge them no more for his subjects. He added that in accepting the crown, he had no other ambition than that of delivering them, even at the expense of his repose and his life, from the Genoese yoke, under which they had too long groaned; that what was painful to him to speak, and still more to bear, was, that they themselves were an obstacle to the accomplishment of his wishes, and that their restless and seditious

temper, was the principal clog that hindered him: that he was glad to let them know that the pompous title of king had not in the least inflated him with pride and vanity; that he had not lost sight of himself in that sphere in which he had lived without ostentation, and like a private man, and that he could again resume that rank without regret; for though his finances were exhausted, he still retained an intrepid heart superior to all the hardships of indigence: that far from blushing, he gloried in being like the Fabricii, looking on honour and renown as his only treasure. This short harangue, full of nobleness and modesty, and which denoted at the same time a brave contempt for the throne, produced so singular an effect on the minds of his hearers, that one can hardly ascribe it to any thing but those secret revolutions, which the aspect of ill-fated virtue sometimes makes even on the most perverse hearts. The Corsicans astonished at the confidence with which he put himself into their hands, who harboured such bad intentions against him, changed their murmurs into protestations of attachment, and their complaints into encomiums: they confessed their faults, expressed their repentance, calling him their Benefactor, their Saviour, and their King: they promised to obey

him in every thing that he should command, and to shed for him the very last drop of their blood.

Notwithstanding these assurances, Theodore, thinking he ought not to rely on the promises of a people inconstant, wild, untractable, and incapable of submission; persuaded also that he should soon have France, Spain, the King of Naples, the Pope, and the Republic of Genoa to withstand, still persisted in his first design of quitting the island, where it was impossible he could support himself without foreign succours of men, arms, and money. He then embarked at Aleria, where a few months before he had been rapturously saluted with the title of king, and amid the tears of a repentant people bade farewell to his sea-encompassed kingdom, which he never again re-visited. In his absence the French invaded the island, but they were bravely repulsed by the Corsicans for three years. At length, the Gallic commander publishing a report of the death of Theodore, accomplished by treachery what he failed to achieve by arms.

In the mean time Theodore proceeded to Constantinople, but his solicitations meeting no success at the Porte, which was entirely taken up with carrying on the war in Hungary, he wandered from country to country under various disguises,

in order to evade the pursuits of hired assassins that followed him everywhere without mercy; thus persecuted, he could not exert his genius, nor put in execution the schemes he had meditated. At length he reached England, at a time when, by the death of the Emperor of Germany, Europe was plunged into a general war; and by making the court sensible of the importance of Corsica, and how serviceable it would be to strengthen the British power in the Mediterranean, he obtained large promises, and a ship of war to carry him to the English fleet in that sea, from which he was to receive every practicable assistance. He reached the shores of his island-kingdom, and received the assurances of the fidelity and devotedness to his cause of the whole people. But the politics of Austria and Sardinia, for whom England drew the sword, favoured not his designs, and he was never suffered to land. He obtained permission of the English Admiral to disembark at Leghorn, from whence he went to Sienna, and again returned to London. At the establishment of peace, France being then the leading power in Europe, his cause became hopeless. Yet, though the King of England forbade his subjects to hold any correspondence with the Corsicans, he refused to deliver up Theodore to the cruel Genoese.

But the ruin of this great and illustrious man was determined on. The minister of Genoa, John Baptist Gastaldi, resident in London, knew he was greatly in want of money, and privately ordered some merchants to supply him with what he needed. For this debt he was quickly arrested, and notwithstanding the privileges of his character, and the passport given him by the king, he was thrown into prison for the paltry sum of four hundred and fifty pounds. Thus this avenger of liberty, this same Theodore who some years before knew how to raise among barbarians a hundred thousand pounds sterling to deliver the Corsicans from the tyranny of the Genoese, by a strange fatality could not find this so inconsiderable a sum to supply his own wants and save him from the bitter miseries of a prison in an opulent nation,—shame to relate!—a nation that prides herself as the champion of liberty, and boasts of her generosity to all the children of misfortune! Poor Theodore, the gallant, the magnanimous, the noble-minded Theodore, suffered a thousand indignities without murmuring; he knew the inutility of complaints, and the hard necessity of submitting to his fate. Without sceptre, without dominion, without possessions, without friends, he found resources only in Providence, and in the tender affection of his beloved

son, whom Theodore had flattered himself, by the help of Great Britain, he should make the heir to a throne.

The treacherous, the unworthy Corsicans abandoned him to his wretched fate; and those who in his elevation admired him as a superior genius, born with the happiest dispositions of body and mind, adorned with every science, and become, by frequenting the courts of the greatest personages in Europe, consummate in political, civil, and military affairs,—in his misfortunes looked on him as a man that had neither greatness of soul nor sensibility of heart; as one who was beholden for his elevation, to the caprice of fortune, rather than to his own merits.

"The giddy world with fortune comes and goes;
Wealth still finds followers, and misfortune foes."

At length by an act of insolvency, he was released from his dismal confinement of seven years. The weight of his miseries and cruel disappointments soon after bowed him to the grave, and he died in extreme indigence, disparaged, despised, discredited by all the world; pitied and regretted by his son alone, the only admirer of his virtues, and the fatal heir of his misfortunes. Thus in the eighteenth century perished broken-hearted

in England, one whose brows had been bound with the golden wreath of royalty, and whose virtues and talents rendered him worthy of the highest honours in Europe. Peace to thy ashes, thou ill-starred prince! The grave has long closed on thy sufferings and ended all thy cares: and though thy bones are mingled with those of the clown and the pauper, thou sleepest as sweetly as the embalmed monarch whose mausoleum, adorned with gorgeous enrichments, lifts its proud dome to the skies, the wonder of the world.

The following unworthy lines by Walpole, are engraved on a stone fixed to the wall of St. Ann's church:

"The grave, great teacher, to a level brings
Heroes and beggars, galley-slaves and kings;
That Theodore this moral learned ere dead,
Fate poured its lessons on his living head,
Bestowed a kingdom, and deny'd him bread."

But to return to myself. During our rambles, my new companion devised and proposed many schemes for our both residing in the metropolis, and bidding farewell to the stage for ever. Among other things, he held out the strongest allurements and forcible arguments to induce me to become a gambler, and, as he said, soon make

my fortune. I freely confess, Frank, I was easily won over to his wishes, and it was agreed that we should share the profits and losses of our unworthy enterprise. He was to initiate me in the mysteries and arts of the table, as far as he was master himself, and I agreed to accompany him nightly to the scene of every thing that is terrible to the feelings of the virtuous. I had still some money left, and borrowed a little more from a relative who resides in town, whose kindness, I conceived, I should soon be able to repay with interest. I handed to my companion all I could muster, with which to open our new campaign.

Never shall I forget the first night of my entering the gambling-house! It was in one of the streets opening into Leicester-square. I felt a deep compunctious visiting of conscience; I reflected on what I had read and heard of the fatal consequences of being a professed gambler; I thought on my tender mother's religious instructions; I thought on my wife and child; I thought —till thought became excessive pain. This, together with the fear, the hope, the anxiety, the novelty of the scene around me, quite overpowered and bewildered my senses. I however saw my new acquaintance stake the first division

of our little sum, and trembled with fear. He lost. I turned pale; but he bid me not regard it, as he did not doubt of soon retrieving the loss with ample gain. He called for spirits, and influenced me to drink more than I had been accustomed to take. The next throw he won. I felt my icy fears melt all away before the ardent sun of Hope. The vapour of the spirits I had drank flew to my brain, and the rattle of the dice, which before made me quake, was suddenly changed into delightful music. Around me was much mirth and laughter, mingled with sighs, groans, and curses. Some faces were briefly lighted up with all the marks of extravagant joy; others deeply clouded with disappointment, care, madness, and despair. In the midst of this hurried and half frantic crowd, a melancholy remembrance of my distant quiet home rushed across my soul, and I thought how different I had been brought up in the religious seclusion of an obscure village:—a sigh broke involuntarily from my bosom, but my friend had again won. Visions of riches, easily obtained, began to float before my imagination, romantic prospects seemed now about to be realized, and I madly believed that I had at last reached the paradise of El Dorada, and that a gambling-house was the modern land of Ophir.

After some slight reverses of fortune, I prevailed on my youthful acquaintance to quit the room, and we returned to our lodgings in high spirits, with several pounds more in our pockets than we had when we left them. For several succeeding evenings our loss and gain were alternately varied, and at the end of a week we found our stock considerably increased. But one night, one fatal night, or perhaps happy night for me, my companion had a continued run of ill luck. We were both distracted, and I desperately urged him to stake the last pound. He did so, and we lost all we had in the world!

How changed now was this house of gold, this Dorada-paradise, to the horrid den of anguish, rage, and despair! We fled from the accursed abode of ruin and plunder, alike unpitied and unthought of by those who were rejoicing in the short-lived triumph of success, and the wretched victims of a despair equal to our own. The agonized state in which I returned, I never can describe or forget! The next morning I was compelled to part with all my clothes, except those on my back. I forswore the gambling-table for ever, flew to the theatrical register-office, and hearing of the situation I now am in, bade farewell to my companion, quitted London, and came

down hither the whole way on foot, through frost and snow.

Here, then, for the first time I play the first line of business, and am at length the hero of the drama. The applause I nightly meet with exceeds my most sanguine expectations, and I am now resolved more than ever to become a great actor. Those stars that shine so bright in the theatrical hemisphere, have risen on the world from as humble obscurity as mine, and perseverance and application will work every thing but miracles. The people of this town are by far the most friendly, generous, and polite of any I ever yet have encountered. I was much pleased last week to hear from the leads of the church, by torch-light, on a fine calm evening, several Christmas carols sung by the choir, accompanied with various musical instruments. As I stood in the distance, it had a fine effect; and as the sacred melody floated on the star-light breezes across the vast savannahs and willow-shaded lakes that surround the town on every side, it seemed in fancy's ear a recapitulation of those seraphic strains of peace and good-will to men which streamed through the midnight air on the plains of Canaan, when fell around the shepherds a celestial glory from the melodious vision of

thronging pomps that sailed on golden clouds along the chambers of the winds, proclaiming the birth of the Redeemer of mankind.

This place is an island situated in the midst of immense marshes; the prospect around is dull, insipid, and uninteresting, affording none of that sweet diversity of hill and valley, forest and mountain, with which the other parts of England so generally abound. Here was a monastery in the days of the Saxons, and Malmesbury paints this spot as a second Eden. It was surrounded with fine woods, meadows of eternal green, smooth and level as a river, and covered with golden flowers, groves of apple-trees, which with their beautifully tinted blossoms perfumed the air, and the vines hung waving from their poles, or crept along the fields, loaded with purple clusters; but so remote was its situation from the rest of the world, that he adds, "when a man comes, he is applauded like an angel."

I have been to view the ruins of Croyland Abbey. Alas! how little now remains of this once-magnificent monastery, founded more than a thousand years ago by Ethelbald, King of Mercia. Previous to its first erection, Guthlac, his chaplain, retired as an anchorite from the bustle and barbaric splendour of a Saxon court

to the dreary silence of this unfrequented spot, surrounded with gloomy forests, lakes, and trackless bogs. There were, some years ago, the remains of a stone cottage, called Anchor-church-house, not very far from the abbey, where was a chapel built on the site of St. Guthlac's hermitage. During the rebellion, the parliamentary forces made this desolated pile their garrison. They soon demolished its beautiful windows of painted glass, which till then adorned its noble church, and hastened on by their barbarous dilapidations the final ruin of this noble edifice. Fragments of walls, foundations, pillars, galleries, tombs, arches, towers, and the western part of its once lofty cathedral still remain, a crumbling and fading testimony of the piety, architecture, and magnificence of past ages. Here was buried the sainted dust of Waltheof, Earl of Northumberland and Huntington, who was beheaded by the Norman conqueror. Here were enshrined the bones of St. Guthlac, and a thousand relics of saints and martyrs, in cases of gold and temples of silver, thickly incrusted with the most precious gems of the east. Here were entombed kings and princes, mighty chiefs, pontiffs, earls, and knights; but their proudly-garnished monuments are crumbled and vanished like their ashes. In vain the

laborious hand of the sculptor curiously adorned their tombs; in vain the banner, spear, and helmet were hung above their marble effigies. Ensign, helmet, armorial shield, and imaged sepulchre, all are gone, swept into ruinous oblivion; not one monumental stone, or legend remains to tell their names or history.—Vain endeavour to perpetuate your memory to the latest generation, ye on whose nod a thousand slaves obsequiously waited, who thought your bones would slumber here in bannered state, till the trump of the archangel should ring through these trembling aisles, and burst with its earth-shaking thunder the cerements of the dead!

There, thought I, as I leant against a ruin of the church, passed in procession to the high altar, the abbot and venerable monks on the said morning of 870, when in the midst of their solemnities, as the choral voices lifted the matin-hymn of praise, the fatal news arrived of the approach of Denmark's destroying hosts, who had defeated the brave youth of Holland, under their gallant leader Earl Algar. This battle had continued for a whole day. The English, far inferior in numbers, on the feast of St. Maurice, had beaten back the north-men to the gates of their entrenchments; and now augmented by the union of several chiefs

and their bands scattered over the country, by keeping in a compact body, of a wedge-like shape, rendered all the assaults of their pagan foes unavailing. Wearied with the bloody toils of the day, the north-men feigned a retreat: the Saxons in spite of the commands and entreaties of their experienced leaders, now dispersed themselves in pursuit of their enemies: the Danes rallied, but no skill of their commanders could re-unite the English; discomfiture immediately followed; their dauntless chiefs for awhile maintained the unequal combat, till they all fell amid a bleeding mountain of friends and foes!

The melodious notes of the organ have suddenly ceased: the morning hymn of praise is changed to the loud wail of sorrow and fear, to the plaintive tones of supplication to heaven for deliverance from the swords of the advancing pagans. All is hurry and alarm, dismay and weeping. In haste they gather together their sacred relics, their holy pictures,* jewelled chalices, cups of gold, embroidered vestments, charters and valuable manuscripts, and with the table of

* The church of Weremouth was ornamented with pictures of the Virgin Mary, the Apostles, and of the Visions in the book of the Revelations, by its founder, St. Bennet, Bishop, as Bede expressly says in his *History of the Abbots* of that monastery. St. Austin and his fellow missionaries bore a cross as their ensign, with a painted picture of Christ, when they preached before King Ethelbert.

the high altar, plated with gold, place them in a large boat. Their domestic utensils they fling into the water.* The flames of the distant villages are now seen ascending in the air; the smoke of desolation darkens the sky; and death and universal destruction gradually close around them!—The clamorous shouts of the approaching enemy are heard on the winds, and the voice of the war-horn of the friends of slaughter comes in blood-freezing tones on their listening ears! The athletic and the youthful speedily embark with their treasure, and reach the wood of Ancraig on the south of this island, where Thorney now stands; there they find refuge with Toretus the recluse, and his hermitical brotherhood. The venerable abbot, with the aged monks, and a few children, all too old or too young to fly, remained in the church, and awaited with calm resignation their fate. I see them now; all clad in their sacred vestments, and assembled in the choir to perform divine service before the altar. The choral strains of sacred music again are floating from aisle to aisle; again the hymn of praise and prayer ascends to Christ and the saints, and again the heart-uttered supplication for deliverance from death and sacrilege trembles on the pale

* This is correctly historical.—See Ingulphus.

lips of the defenceless assembly. The children lift their little hands in earnest entreaty to the Virgin for protection, and the voice of the abbot is drowned in tears.

Hark!—The blood-drinking tigers are at the gates: the hideous yells of the destroyers ring around the echoing walls of the abbey: they burst asunder the doors, and rush in like a torrent of fire! Not unresisting age, nor innocent childhood, performing the duties of religion in the temple of God, can disarm these hellish barbarians of their rage. Exulting to find the priests of the cross on whom to exercise their remorseless rage, they rush down the crowded aisles: their horrid swords flash a hideous light as they advance, their raven-painted standards are waved aloft in triumph, and the sanctuary is profaned with savage shouts and shrieks of fear. On flew the Danish chief Oskitul to the steps of the altar, and with his sword cleve to the chine the holy abbot as he there knelt in prayer: the heads of the martyred monks are lopped from their shoulders, and the little innocents pierced through with lances. Those who escaped from the horrid scene were cruelly tortured, to extort a discovery of the treasure of the monastery. The prior was murdered in the vestry, and the sub-prior in the

refectory. The blood of its guiltless inmates was shed in every part of the abbey. Not a being was spared, except one little boy, whose cherub-like beauty awoke compassion in the bosom of the ferocious chief Sidroc, and induced him to spare and guard his life amid the general massacre.—The monuments, the shrines, the altars were all demolished; the tombs violated, in the hope of finding hidden booty. On the third day they fired this magnificent pile, and their savage shouts of triumph ascended with the struggling flames amid the insulted skies. It soon became a smouldering heap of ashes, and the destroyers set forward in quest of other temples and cities to plunder, and fresh victims on whom to inflict the excesses of their bloody inhumanity!

The next object of their destruction, was the still more magnificent Abbey of Peterborough,—"the glory of the architecture of the age; whose library was a large repository of books, which the anxious labour of two centuries had collected!" There, also, all its inmates, without any mercy, were put to the sword, and its conflagration continued fifteen days. After quitting Peterborough for the south, the little boy of Croyland escaped from his cruel preserver at the passage of the Nen, where the baggage and immense

plunder of the north-men, under the care of Sidroc, were overturned into a deep whirlwoop. While the pagan troops were busily employed in recovering from the waters part of their blood-stained treasures, the boy fled into the adjacent woods, and wandering all night, reached this place by day-break. Here he beheld the still smoking ruins of the abbey, and the mutilated remains of his murdered friends. I see him now sitting amid the dilapidated walls, and lifting his tearful eyes to the rising sun. With what joy he sees the monks returning from Thorney to extinguish the fire, and bury their martyred brethren! How heart-rending is his tale of their death, of the unexampled cruelties practised by the demons of homicide!

Farewell, O Croyland! thou art again in ruins; thy beauty is again consumed, and all thy splendour departed from thee. But never more shalt thou rise from thy ashes; thy continual decay shall never be repaired, nor thy magnificence be renewed!

I am, dear Frank,

Yours,

SYLVATICUS.

LETTER LXI.

Leicester.

MY FRIEND,

THE satisfactory expectations I was led to indulge in my last from my engagements at Thorney, were unfortunately but of short duration. For soon after I had addressed you, the manager transferred the business of the company to the little town, or rather village of Wansford. This place being totally unable to support a theatre, a new arrangement was adopted, which not only deprived me of the power of assisting my family, but barely afforded subsistence for myself, and subjected all to many privations. In the place of regular salaries, we were now put on shares; that is, each performer had a share of the nightly receipts of the house, which here often did not amount to eighteen-pence! The manager had a triple allowance for his scenes and dresses, besides his own for performing, and therefore did not feel the miseries we endured. The vexations and uncertainties of so precarious a mode of subsistence were, however, considerably softened

from the acquaintance I formed with a respectable schoolmaster and his wife; they proved themselves kind and generous friends, and I often visited the family, and partook of their cordial hospitality. After waiting for the advantage of a benefit, I took my departure: others speedily followed, and I believe the manager has now not more than two or three remaining with him.

On quitting the Wansford comedians, I came hither, in expectation of finding the theatre open; but am again disappointed, the season being closed, and the performers all gone to a considerable distance. I yesterday received a letter from Maria: her aunt is released from confinement, and now resides with her; but herself and her child are both ill. Let what will be the consequence, I shall the day after to-morrow set off for D——shire. I shall walk the whole way, and go in as direct a line as I possibly can, by the guidance of the map, through Oxford to Salisbury.

I shall devote this and the next evening to the pleasure of giving you some few ideas which struck me, on visiting two or three interesting places since last I wrote. I am at the house of the kindest landlady I ever met with. She says her son, an invalid about my own age, is on the coast of Dorsetshire for the benefit of the sea-air

and bathing. Poor woman, she laments his absence, and his being wholly among strangers. On his account she is friendly and kind to me; and her charges, happily for my pocket, are more moderate than those of any inn I was ever at before. I have a mother too, who, like her, loves her son, and sorrows often for his departure; and now I seem to feel more than ever, what her anxiety must be for me, an unfortunate wanderer.—But ah, dear mother! I have ever in pity spared you a knowledge of my real sufferings and distresses: to you I have only told the bright side of my history, well knowing what thorns of sorrow would pierce your bosom, were the gloomy shades of agonizing care and continual disappointment with which it abounds, fully displayed to your view. Maria, too, will endure all in silence and submission to the will of Providence, nor utter one complaining word to heighten a mother's sorrow for the absence of an only child.

But let me return to my promise. On my way hither, I visited Fotheringay Castle, the last prison of Mary, Queen of Scots, and sat for a considerable time musing in sadness amid its highly interesting ruins. It was originally the baronial dwelling of Edmund Langley, Duke of York, whose bones lie in the ancient collegiate church

of Fortheringay. Here the celebrated Richard III. was born, Oct. 2, 1452. It was a strong fortress, with a lofty keep, surrounded with a wall, double ditch, and the river Nyne overlooking to a wide extent the neighbouring country. Hoary fabric of other days, but a small portion remains of thy former strength and grandeur, while every stone of thy relics seems to utter a voice of lamentation and wo! The pavement of thy ruined hall has been stained with regal blood; thy turret-chambers, that held in cold and cheerless durance the beauteous queen of two powerful kingdoms, are levelled to the ground! Thou prison of an anointed princess, thou dungeon of the regal captive, thy towers are dismantled, and thy gates and bars taken away for ever! No more shall the sigh of the prisoner be heard within thy ramparts, nor blood of kingly line be shed in thy raven-haunted halls! The peerless beauty of the age in which she lived, the wife of two kings, the angel-like centre of royal splendour, the matchless idol of chivalry, the brilliant magnet of all that was magnificent, sprightly, and gay in the luxurious court of France, the radiant star of the north, the winner of all hearts that gazed on her beauty, after languishing out long years of disappointed hope, anxiety, and alarm, a miserable

captive in these gloomy towers, ended her days on the scaffold!

It was eventide, as I sat meditating on a fragment of the castle. Methought a female of inexpressible sweetness and beauty, glided amid the dusky ruins. She approached me: I felt her star-bright eye like a divine spell on my heart: Who shall describe her form?

"Her brow, another Ida, on whose top
Beauty, and majesty, and wisdom sit
Contending for the prize; her radiant locks,
That o'er her forehead's white float gracefully,
Like waves of gold chafing an ivory shore;
Her lovely lids, fair as those fleecy clouds
Whose dazzling whiteness gems the summer sky,
And like them only chided at, because
'Tis heaven's own blue they hide; her eyes, whose lustre
A tender melancholy seems to shade,
Save when deep thought, or deeper feeling, fills
Those spirit-searching orbs; and then they flash
The mind's magnificent lightnings, and her face
Grows spiritually fine, as though her soul
(Like a bright flame enshrined in alabaster)
Shone through her delicate and transparent skin,
Revealing all its glory."

She heaved a sigh; and music, divinely wild, passed faintly by on the breeze. The vision of

beauty spoke, and my soul was ravished with the purest harmony. Her words, that melted on the perfumed air, softer, sweeter than the strains of the Æolian harp, methought were these: "Gentle youth, fear me not;—thou art one who drinkest of the Castalian fount; and I ever loved those in whom the inspiration of genius shone forth like the moon that embosomed the eternal light of the sun, to gild our wintry path through the night of darkness and storms,—as Ronsard, the favourite bard of Gallic sovereigns, and Rizzio, child of song, with many others can well testify. Poor youth, thou hast been unfortunate: I read a tale of suffering and disappointment unmarked by the giddy world in thy tear-dimmed eye; but peace and joy may yet be thine. My fate from the cradle to the scaffold was wrapped in the gloomiest clouds of sorrow, care, and despondency. And O, how few and short were the lucid beams of happiness and repose that broke through the tempests to gild my crown of thorns! My father fell in battle when I lay in the cradle of infancy unconscious of his fate: but love and voluptuous pleasure mingled their transient splendours to illume my path, when first I touched the Gallic shores. Short was the fleeting hour of revelry and bliss! I became a widow, and the voice

of my own nation called me to the throne of my ancestors. With reluctance I quitted the gay and bewitching scenes of France; involuntary tears bathed my cheek as I stood on the vessel's deck, which bore me from that dear-loved country, and caught the last glimpse of her white cliffs swiftly fading from my sight, in the dim and rising mists of the evening ocean? How sombre, cold, and cheerless appeared the barren shores of Scotland on my return! Silent and sorrowful did I pass onward to my gloomy palace of Holyrood, sighing for those gone-by days, when all was laughing beauty and magnificence around me: nor could the astounding shouts and heart-breathed acclamations of my glad people, though much I loved them, cheer my pensive spirits. Young, and what earth calls beautiful, I won the hearts of all the Scottish nation, though religious phrensy and ungovernable ambition embroiled its chiefs in eternal feuds; and my hand was sought in marriage by the mighty potentates of the continent. But I saw the youthful, the elegant and accomplished Darnley, and love again spread a short day-dream of enchantment and glory around me. Alas, how transient were its splendours! I was betrayed, my fond passion insulted, my heart trampled on by a sottish tyrant, whom my

fondness and power had raised to an equal participation of kingly honours on the throne of Scotland. The blood of the guiltless Rizzio rested on his head, and he fell a victim to the ambition of others. Posterity has blackened my memory, but my innocence is recorded on high. Woes followed fast upon me: my third husband, forced by the lawless barons from my arms, was driven a wretched fugitive from his country, and compelled to obtain a living by plunder on the ocean; he miserably perished, raving with despair, a captive in the dungeons of Norway. Then was I made a prisoner in my own kingdom, my child was taken from me, and the diadem torn for ever from my brows! I escaped from my captivity, but misfortune still pursued me. O, what agonies did I endure as I stood on the ancient stone,* and beheld the defeat of my army in the fields of Langside; when I saw my brave followers, who had flocked to my standard resolved to set the crown once more on my brows, smote down and compelled to flee before the face of my cruel foemen. Despair seized my soul! I fled on wings of fear to Dundsennan, and crossed the fatal Solway Frith. England seemed my only

* This stone, perhaps a Celtic monument, is still to be seen in a little copse near the ruins of Cathcart Castle.

refuge, and I fondly hoped, in the arms of a sister queen, to have found a shelter from all my enemies, the balm of friendship for all my woes.

"But ah, how cruelly was I mistaken! Instead of a regal court, a prison received me; and for the arms of friendship I felt the envenomed stings of an insidious serpent. Years of miserable confinement were worn away in unjust accusations, cabals, and the most barbarous policy and dissimulation of my enemies. At length love once more awoke in my heart for the gallant, the generous, the compassionate Norfolk; nor could the tears of captivity extinguish the holy flame. Alas! those hopes his passion inspired, like the last faint rose of departed summer, soon withered and perished beneath the wintry storms of my relentless destiny. His life was forfeited for me, and in my unhappy cause he perished, in the bloom of life, on the scaffold! The horrors of imprisonment were now rendered more rigorous and intolerable. A thousand schemes were employed to render me odious to the world, and assassins hired to take away my life. After a doleful captivity of seventeen years, with a broken heart and ruined constitution, I was confined in a common jail, within a ruinous chamber, so shattered and cold as to be scarcely habitable even in summer. There

was I compelled to endure, unrelieved by medical aid, bodily as well as mental afflictions, and every misery and indignity unfeeling power could inflict; while all opportunity was denied me by my stern keepers to perform those acts of charity and kindness to the poor around me, which had constituted my only solace in my long and wretched durance. At length my persecutors, to consummate their malice, by an act of the senate of England rendered me accountable with my life, not only for my own deeds, but also for the treasonable deeds of others, over whom I could have no controul. A conspiracy against my rival of England was formed, of which acquitting Heaven knows I was most innocent; and on its discovery my enemies resolved, by virtue of their late act, to arraign and condemn me,—me, a foreign and sovereign prince, who came not hither in arms, but an unhappy fugitive to seek protection and redress from a sister-queen.

"In yonder hall did that unjust tribunal sit to hear and try my cause. I consented to appear before it; and unassisted by advocate or friend, was I compelled to plead my own innocence, and defend my honour. But in vain. Notwithstanding my fortitude, resolution, and refutation of their high impeachments, I was found guilty and con-

demned to die! Debased, degraded, falsely accused, and deprived of the consolations of the church, in this hall I fell a martyr to my religion! Here closed the long eventful life of suffering and disappointment of the far-famed Mary of Scotland! Happy was that morn on which I was ushered to the sable scaffold; and happy was the hour in which I bowed my head on the block, and the flashing axe was stained with my blood!"

The voice of music ceased, like the last soft tones of the melodious organ breathing the evening hymn, amid the twilight aisles of the spacious cathedral. My eyes were dimmed with tears, and cast on the ground; and when I raised them to look once more on the shadow of majesty, the beautiful spirit was gone. But as I cast a glance toward the ruined hall of the castle, methought I beheld it filled with weeping spectators; the awful scaffold was erected in the centre, and the grim headsman stood by it with the gleaming instrument of death. From the entrance of the hall advanced in slow and solemn procession, the Earls of Shrewsbury, Kent, Derby, and Pembroke, with the High Sheriff, the Dean of Peterborough, and their numerous attendants. Then came the ill-fated Mary, leaning on her two attendant warders; her sorrow-faded eye seemed lighted up

with an unearthly joy, and her tear-washed cheek suddenly blossomed with the celestial rose of a sublime faith, that told her the period of her woes was come, and the crown of martyrdom prepared to deck her brows. She was splendidly attired in black velvet, adorned with crimson and flowers of pearls; a white veil gracefully flowed from her lofty head-dress to the ground; an Agnus Dei hung by a pomander chain at her neck, her beads at her girdle, and she carried a crucifix of ivory in her hand. Behind her came Melvil, the master of her household, and some few of her domestics, who at her earnest entreaty were permitted to attend her at her last hour; they wept aloud as they followed their beloved mistress to the place of death. She turned to Melvil, and again I heard that voice of plaintive music so divinely sweet, saying, "Weep not, good Melvil, there is at present greater cause for rejoicing. Thou shalt this day see Mary Stuart delivered from all her cares, and such an end put to her tedious sufferings as she has long expected. Bear witness that I die constant in my religion, firm in my fidelity towards Scotland, and unchanged in my affection to France. Commend me to my son; tell him I have done nothing injurious to his kingdom, to his honour, or his

rights, and God forgive all those who have thirsted without cause for my blood!" Mounting the steps of the scaffold with an undaunted air, she beheld with perfect composure the instrument of death; she sat in the chair prepared for her, while the warrant for her execution was read aloud, and then knelt down and prayed inaudibly; till, rising, she for the last time blest the world with the dying tones of her melodious voice as she prayed for the catholic church, for the prosperity of her beloved son, whom she had not seen nor been permitted to embrace for so many years, and for a long and peaceful reign to her cruel and artful persecutor, Elizabeth. "I hope for mercy," said she, "only through the death of Christ, at the foot of whose image I now willingly shed my blood." Pressing the crucifix to her lips, she continued, "As thy arms, O Jesus, were extended on the cross, so with the outstretched arms of thy mercy receive me, and forgive my sins!" So saying, she knelt down, and laid her neck on the block. "I saw the gleam of the axe, and closed my eyes: I heard the heavy and horrible death-blows, and a frightful voice soon exclaimed, "So perish all Queen Elizabeth's enemies!"

I am, dear Frank, Yours, &c.

SYLVATICUS.

LETTER LXII.

Leicester.

My Kind Friend,

This town is the Ratæ Coritanorum of the Romans. Dr. Stukeley, nearly one hundred years ago, discovered traces of the Roman wall quite round it, and likewise considerable remains of a temple dedicated to Janus, which he calls a noble piece of antiquity, and considers the adjacent church of St. Nicholas to have been "built on the very area of it, and out of its ruins:" but such is the increase of houses here since his time, that I could discover nothing of either. I visited the site of St. Mary de Pree's Abbey, where Cardinal Wolsey was buried: scarce a vestige of the monastery is now to be seen, yet it brought recollections of other days. There was the last resting place of that man of unbounded ambition, long the favourite of the most haughty and tyrannical potentate in Europe, grand primate, chancellor, and cardinal of England, and an aspirant to the pontifical chair of St. Peter; whose palaces were more splendid than those of the monarch he

served, whose attendants were nobles, and whose retinue exceeded in grandeur and number even his royal master's!

How different was his coming hither, to his arrival at his palace of Hampton Court, when he there received in state the French Ambassadors in 1527, when his chambers were hung with the richest arras, and the walls adorned with an immense profusion of gold and silver plate; "When," as Cavendish says, in his life of this prelate, "he commanded the principal officers of his household neither to spare for any cost, expense, or travayle to make such a triumphant banquet as the Frenchmen might not only wonder at here, but also make a glorious report of it in their own country; when their service came up, in the magnificent chamber of state, in such abundance, both costly and full of subtleties, and with such a pleasant noyse of musick, that they (as it seemed) were rapt into a heavenly paradise. Before the second course, my lord Cardinall came in, booted and spurred, all sodainely amongst them, and bade them proface;* at whose coming there was great joy, with rising every man from his place, whom my lord caused to sit still and

* A French salutation abridged from *Bon prou vous fasse*, i. e. Much good may it do you.

keep their rooms, and being in his apparell as he rode, called for a chayre and sat down in the middst of the high paradise, laughing and being as merry as ever I saw hym in all my lyffe. Anone came up the second course, with so many dishes, suttleties, and devises, above a hundred in number, which were of so goodly proportion and so costly, that I thinke the Frenchmen never saw the like; the wonder was no less than it was worthy indeed. There were castles with images, in the same Paul's church for the quantity, as well counterfeited as the painter should have painted it on a clothe or wall. There were beasts, birds, foules, and personages most likely made and counterfeited, some fighting with swords, some with guns and cross-bows, some vaughting and leaping, some dauncing with ladies, some on horseback in complete harnesse justing with long and sharpe speares, with many more devises. Among all, one I noted was a chesse-boord made of spiced plate, with men there of the same and for the good proportion; and because the Frenchmen be very cunning and expert in that play, my lord Cardinall gave the same to a gentleman of France, that he may convey the same into his country. Then took my lord a bole of golde, filled with Ipocrasse, and, putting off his cap,

said, I drynke to the king my soveraigne lord, and next unto the king your master, and therewith did drynke a good draught; and when that done, he desired the *graund maistre* to pledge him, cup and all, the which was well worth 500 markes, and so caused all the boords to pledge these two royal princes: then went the cups so merrily about, that many of the Frenchmen were faine to be led to their beds. Then rose my lord, and went into his privy chamber to pull off his boots, and to shift him, and then went he to supper; then returned into the chamber of presence to the Frenchmen, using them so lovingly and familiarly, that they could not commend him too much; and whilest they were in communication and other pastimes, all their liveries were served to their chambers; every chamber had a bason and a ewer of sylver, a great livery pot of sylver and gylt; yea, and some chambers had two livery pots with wine and beere, a bole, a goblet, and a pot of sylver to drink in, both for their wine and beere: a sylver candlesticke both white and plain having in it two sizes, and a staff torche of waxe, a fine manchet, and a cheat loaf. Thus was every chamber furnished through the house, and yet the cupboards in the two banquiting chambers were not touched."

How striking is the contrast of that hour of magnificent and king-like festivity, to the day when he alighted at this gate from his rude litter, when

"The reverend abbot,
With all his convent, honourably received him;
To whom he gave these words: 'O father abbot,
An old man, broken with the storms of state,
Is come to lay his weary bones among ye;
Give him a little earth for charity!'"

In vain didst thou erect a "tomb-house" with its splendid monument, surpassing in pomp the mausoleum of kings;* where in state thou proudly hopedst thy ashes would repose till the evening of time, the worshipped attraction of the bare-footed pilgrim and the superstitious devotee. Thy relics reposed not beneath its gilded images and statues of exquisite workmanship; its sculptured walls, adorned by the artist with the richest treasures of the pencil, were destined never to become thy sepulchral-home. Thy bones have been sacrilegiously uncoffined, and thy dust scattered to the winds of heaven! Thus ends the tale of greatness, and thus the power and glory of this world pass away into utter oblivion."

* "Wolsey's tomb-house in Winsor Castle, for the statuary of which Benedetto of Florence received 4,250 ducats; and for the gilding only one half of the monument, 360*l.* was expended. The ceiling was painted by Verrio."

After viewing the few and scattered fragments of the convent, I set off in quest of the celebrated field of Bosworth, which I reached in less than an hour. What a scene for contemplation! my imagination carried me back to the last days of the last Plantagenet. How solemn was that evening which preceded the last battle of the roses, fought on this field, when the tyrant Richard withdrew to his tent, musing on the dread events of the morrow, which must see him the conqueror firmly seated, without a rival, on that throne which he had waded through so much innocent blood to obtain; or stretched, cold and crownless, amid the heaps of bleeding pile, an object of execration and horror to mankind.

It was on this awful night, according to a letter which I have read from Dr. Thomas Brett to Dr. William Warren, president of Trinity [illegible], that the king took his last farewell in his tent of Richard Plantagenet, his natural son, who himself thus describes that interview. "I was boarded with a Latin schoolmaster, without knowing who my parents were, till I was fifteen or sixteen years old; only a gentleman who acquainted me he was no relative of mine, came once a quarter and paid for my board, and took care to see that I wanted for nothing. One day this gentleman took me,

and carried me to a great fine house, where I passed through several stately rooms, in one of which he left me, bidding me stay there. Then a man richly dressed, with a star and garter, came to me, asked me some questions, talked kindly to me, and gave me some money. Then the fore-mentioned gentleman returned, and conducted me back to my school.

"Some time after, the same gentleman came to me again with a horse and proper accoutrements, and told me I must take a journey with him into the country. We went into Leicestershire, and came to Bosworth field, and I was carried to King Richard's tent. The king embraced me, and told me I was his son. 'But child,' said he, 'to-morrow I must fight for my crown. And assure yourself if I lose that, I will lose my life too: but I hope to preserve both. Do you stand on yonder hill where you may see the battle out of danger, and when I have gained the victory, come to me; I will then own you to be mine, and take care of you. But if I should be so unfortunate as to lose the battle, then shift as well as you can, and take care to let no one know that I am your father; for no mercy will be shown to any one so nearly related to me.' The king then presented me with a purse of gold, and giving

me a farewell embrace, dismissed me from his tent. I followed the king's directions; and when I saw the battle lost and the king killed, I hastened back to London, sold my horse and fine clothes; and the better to conceal myself from all suspicion of being son to a king, and that I might have the means to live by my honest labour, I put myself apprentice to a bricklayer. But having a competent skill in the Latin tongue, I was unwilling to lose it; and having an inclination also to reading, and no delight in the conversation of those I am obliged to work with, I generally spend all the time I have to spare in reading by myself."

The "letter" says, "When Sir Thomas Moyle built Eastwell House, near London, about the year 1544, he observed his chief bricklayer, whenever he left off work, retired with a book. Sir Thomas had curiosity to know what book the man read, but was some time before he could discover it; he still putting the book up if any one came toward him. However at last, Sir Thomas surprised him, and snatched the book from him, and looking into it found it to be Latin. He then examined him and finding he pretty well understood that language, he inquired how he came by his learning. Hereupon the man told him, as

he had been a good master to him, he would venture to trust him with a secret he had never before revealed to any one. He then related the above story. Sir Thomas said, 'You are now old and almost past your labour; I will give you the running of my kitchen as long as you live.' He answered, 'Sir, you have a numerous family; I have been used to live retired, give me leave to build a house of one room for myself in such a field, and there, with your good leave, I will live and die.' Sir Thomas granted his request, he built his house, and there continued to his death. Richard Plantagenet was buried the 22d day of December, anno ut supra ex registro de Eastwell, sub 1550. This is all the register mentions of him, so that we cannot say whether he was buried in the church or churchyard; nor is there now any other memorial of him except the tradition in the family, and some little marks where his house stood. This story my late lord, Heneage Earl of Winchelsea told me in the year 1720." Thus lived and died in low and poor obscurity, the only remaining son of Richard III!

On that memorable and important day of the 22d August, 1485, a day which ended the long and horrible contest of the roses, bustle and hurrying to and fro were here seen in the camps

through the gray twilight of dawn. The king, completely armed in his rattling garb of steel, came forth from his phantom-haunted tent, mounted his milk-white charger, rode through the hurrying and half-formed ranks, and arranged the order of battle. Nor is Richmond idle. The voices of both the king and the prince I seem to hear floating by me on the morning winds, as they harangue their shouting hosts, and cheer them to the furious onset. The two armies now approach each other; a narrow and dreadful space lies between them. Richard, the bravest soldier of the day, is seen with the diadem of England blazing above his helmet, his spear gleaming like a fiery comet, and his crimson robe streaming on the early breeze. Riding on his white steed from rank to rank, his voice thundered forth—

"Fight, gentlemen of England! fight, bold yeomen!
Draw, archers, draw your arrows to the head!
Spur your proud horses hard, and ride in blood!"

The armies no longer maintained a fearful pause; they began the scene of human bloodshed by a discharge of arrows: but soon their quivers were empty, and they closed on each other sword in hand. Then did the astounding din of battle ring

through thy field, renowned Bosworth!' The ranks of Richmond fought with the most enthusiastic ardour; but those of the king were heartless in the cause of so cruel a tyrant; while the neutrality which the Stanleys maintained, posted to the south of the royal standard, greatly discouraged many. As yet the sun had not reached its meridian, and only the front ranks had been engaged. Richard, eager as the hungry lion to seize his prey, advancing towards the van of battle was informed, that Richmond was posted behind yonder hill, with a slender guard of warriors. He immediately spurred his horse to the top of that ascent, whence he was shown the red rose of England,—the regal flower of the Lancastrians. He grasped his spear, fixed it in the rest, and exclaimed aloud, "Let all true knights attend me, and I will quickly decide this quarrel; but if none dare follow me, I will try the cause alone." Down rushed the fierce usurper like a whirlwind in its resistless fury, attended by numerous warriors of fame and distinction. Thus by a bold manœuvre, he thought to have speedily dispatched the weakly-guarded Richmond, and thus have won the field by a single blow. His courage was invincible, and his sword seemed as resistless as the bolt launched from the flame-

winged thunder-cloud. His first encounter was with Sir William Brandon, the standard-bearer of Richmond; at one stroke of his furious brand, he clove his head asunder. Sword to sword he met the athletic and warlike knight, Sir John Cheney, whom with an overwhelming impetus he instantly unhorsed. Rushing onwards towards Richmond, he hewed down all opposers; but the Cambrian prince dastardly shrunk from the terrible conflict, and suffered his followers to intervene betwixt him and death: but his retreat had been in vain, had not Sir William Stanley, observing his danger, with three thousand soldiers closed immediately around the king and his brave followers. Here Richard hemmed in by superior numbers, still fought with determined valour, till all his friends were either prostrate on the gore-drenched field, or fled from the unequal strife. Alone he stood amid a host of deadly weapons, undaunted and firm as the rock that braves the foamy swell of the tempest-troubled ocean. At length he fell,—gloriously fell, it must be admitted, in spite of the hatred we bear to his character,—overcome only by numbers, and covered with a thousand mortal stabs!

I remain, dear Frank,

Yours sincerely,

SYLVATICUS.

LETTER LXIII.

L—— Cottage.

DEAR FRANK,

ON quitting Leicester, I set off through Northampton for Oxford. About two miles from the former place, I visited the village of Weston-Favel, that I might see the vicarage house, the spot honoured by the residence of my favourite author. Here breathed his last sigh the divine Hervey!—I shall not stop to describe my melancholy feelings, as I wandered from tomb to tomb in the churchyard of that village; nor the strong emotions of my mind as I entered Oxford, that ancient and renowned seat of learning. The many great characters in the annals of literature who have from thence arisen on the world, and shone like stars of the first magnitude, and the light of whose renown has through the long and shadowy night of time blazed with unfading lustre, rendered Oxford to me a second Jerusalem. This is my pilgrimage, thought I, to the sacred fountain of wisdom. Alas for me! I must only behold its inspiring waves, but my thirsty soul cannot stay to quaff one cheering draught!

I spent a few short hours in viewing the outside of the many noble colleges which adorn that fine city; but time nor circumstance would permit my beholding anything more. As I passed along the magnificent High-street, deeply did I sigh over my hard fate, which had precluded me for ever from entering one of those learned seminaries, that like superb palaces rose around me on every side: nor could I repress the tear of bitter anguish, as I quitted its gates, to reflect how the source of divine lore had been sealed to me, and how deeply the few and scanty drops which my eager soul had tasted, had been embrued with almost every poignant misery that the heart of man can endure.

From Oxford I journeyed on to Marlborough, and from thence to Salisbury. Here I could not but prolong my stay a few hours, to visit the interesting remains of the ancient city of Sorbiodunum, one of the noblest vestiges of the old warlike dwellers of Ynis Prythian to be found at this day in the whole island. In spite of the different modes of fortification and architecture used by the successive nations who conquered and dwelt in this sublime fortress,—the queen of the west,—the *nova Roma* of Britain,—it still retains its primitive formation; and though the

palace of the Cæsars, the classical and beautiful temples and amphitheatres of the Romans with their durable walls of flint and brick, the heavy and barbarous grandeur of the Saxon towers and gateways, and the richly ornamented cathedral with its lofty spires, and the impregnable castle of the Normans that rose above the surrounding plains, an immense citadel amid the clouds, guarded with portcullis, bastion, turret, and massy battlement, have all vanished from the place whereon they stood, and scarce one stone is left on another to mark its faded magnificence, yet the original ramparts of the Britons remain entire, and it still appears in nearly its pristine state,—the strong capital of the Hœdui, —the mighty hill-city of the wild shepherds and skin-clad hunters of the vast plains and forests, that surrounded it on every side. In those days, within the naked but prodigious circumvallations, were erected the clod-formed booths and tents of the aborigiual Britons; where, with their families and cattle, they defended themselves from the sudden and furious incursions of their barbarous and exterminating enemies.

This city forms an immense circle on the summit of a hill, near the western foot of which flows the Avon. Its outer rampart is low, with

two entrances,—one to the east, and the other to the west, guarded by bastions or lunettes of earth, and to this succeeds a deep ditch. The second rampart appears of a wonderful height, on which once stood a wall twelve feet in thickness, with twelve lofty towers at regular intervals, whose foundations Dr. Stukeley plainly discovered. Within this wall stood the noble city, with its Norman cathedral on the north-west, its circular streets, and splendid mansions. It was divided into two parts, a wall running north and south, the ditch and rampart of which are yet partly to be seen. Above this city rose on another hill in the centre, surrounded with a deep trench and lofty vallum, the grand citadel of the Romans, the British capitol, the palace of the Cæsars, and the towered castle of the Saxon and Norman kings. A double flight of steps led up to the grand portal of this magnificent seat of power and dominion, not a fragment of which doth now remain. What an august and most splendid appearance must this ancient city have made at a distance, in the zenith of its glory! But its pomp is departed, its

> "Cloud-capt towers, its gorgeous temples,
> Yea, all that it inherited have dissolved,
> And like the baseless fabric of a vision,
> Left not a wreck behind!"

As I sat musing beneath the waving ash and wild thorns that grow on the green ramparts of this lofty palace of the west, I fancied that I beheld Constantius Chlorus, the father of Constantine the Great, who made this city his principal residence, advancing hither in triumph along the leening street that comes up to the eastern entrance. The restorer of Britain to the imperial diadem, from which it had been torn by the manful arm of the redoubted Carausius, comes exulting from the battle, where he hath overthrown the hateful Allectus; who, having murdered his bosom friend Carausius, the emperor of Albion, usurped the purple. The blood of the tyrant is on his sword, the garland of victory on his brows: before him march the cohorts in their glittering armour; the martial instruments of the Tubicines are heard to sound in deep and tuneful concert the song of triumph; and the hills repeat on every side the shouts of joy for the second conquest of Britain. The priests precede his chariot in solemn procession, with victims bound with white fillets and wreaths of flowers to be offered in sacrifice to the gods; chariots covered with garlands are seen loaded with the spoils of the foe; and the splendid armour of Allectus, with the crown of Britain, are borne aloft by the stoutest warrior in the

ranks. Next moves the conqueror himself in his car of glory, over which the image of victory outspreads its golden wings; behind him advance the chiefs of his numerous host, adorned with their armillæ, phaleræ, and blazing torques of gold: betwixt their plume-crowned helmets and the vexilla, or splendid banners of silk of various colours, flash the golden eagles of battle, like the westering sunbeams between the gem-hued clouds of a gorgeous sky. Ten thousand follow in various arms of brass and steel, and form an interminable line of bickering light, stretching like a vast lava-track across the sky-bounded champaign. The city outpours its multitudes to meet him; the shouts of his welcoming ascend to the clouds, and roll in thunder through the streets of Sorbioduuum's lofty city. He mounts the marble steps of the palace of princes; he ascends to the capitol. I see him now in his glittering robes of triumph; his purple paludamentum streams like a blood-died banner on the winds; he waves his conquering arm aloft; he salutes the citizens, and the mingled shouts of the army and the people are heard beyond the solitary temple of rocks, beyond the blood-stained altars of Cor Gaur.* The victor enters the impe-

* The British name of Stonehenge.

rial halls of the Cæsars; he sacrifices to the gods, and sits at the banquet of warriors, amid the splendid cœnatio, on beds of purple and gold.

Scenes such as these have been witnessed, O Sorbiodunum, within thy gates; for here likewise, after his mighty conquests in the north, reposed the emperor Severus from the toils of war, and feasted with his mighty men in more than regal pomp. But how silent art thou now! The viol and the harp are heard no more within thy walls! Of the multitudes that thronged thy gates, no name or trace is left; they are all departed with thy glory, and thy only music is the song of the lark as he soars above thy topmost mound, and the simple lay of the rustic as he ploughs up the ground where stood thy temples and palaces, as he sows with corn thy forsaken streets: while the raven sits on the last naked fragment of the imperial palace, and utters her illboding notes to the passing winds!

After the invasion of the Saxon Cerdic, who founded the kingdom of Wessex, this city was taken by his son Kynric, about 552. Uther, the Celtic king, who reigned over the south of Britain, and Natanlood were both dead before the fall of Sorbiodunum. The last general, or prince, fell in battle, leading the greatest army of the Britons

that had ever assembled to check the progress of the Saxons, against Cerdic. He was slain with 5000 of his followers; and so great was the disaster, that the region far around the scene of conflict was for ages called by his name. This place has been long disputed by authors; but as the Saxon name of the New Forest was Ytene, which certainly has a great affinity with Natan, pronounced Nætæn, it is almost certain that the New Forest was the scene of that memorable action.

Alas for Sorbiodunum! Before the ferocious hordes of pagan Saxons, thy beauty and greatness fell! Thy lofty walls could not defend thee from the beleaguring foe,—the savage sea-king, and the horrible enfrenzied Berserkir;* who, when he fought, howled like infuriate beasts of prey, and rushed on to every crime and cruelty which frantic rage could act, demolished thy gates, and entered thy blood-died palaces with hideous shouts and flashing seaxes!† Thy young men were slain in thy streets, and the shrieks of violated virgins and matrons ascended

* The fury of the Berserkir of the north was a horrible artifice of battle, designed to intimidate the foe. Odin is said to have practised it, and boasted of it as a magical trick. Saxo describes the Berserkir fury in his seventh book, pp. 123—4.

† Seaxon,—the crooked sword of the Saxon.

in vain to heaven! Thy churches became the temples of Woodin: the thunder-bearing images of Thor were lifted up on thine altars, and the life-stream of the hapless captive polluted the sacred dwelling of the Most High!

Who can think of those days of slavery, desolation, and wo, and not even at this distant period, drop a tear for the sad widows of Britain, who from these walls looked anxiously forth to hail their lords' return from yonder plains. There, under the false show of seeming peace and amity, had Hengist the Saxon spread the fatal banquet for the kings and chiefs of this envied island, and with them held council amid the grand and venerable temple of the druids: the signal given, the Saxons' bloody knives at once destroyed the flower and pride of Albion's princely warriors.

"At that dread hour in Cæsar's* city gates,
The Briton wives and mothers sat; at eve
They from the plain had homeward turned, to rock
Their infants' rosy sleep, or trim the couch
For him beloved and loving; some, from joy,
Sleepless sat watching the gray shadows fall,
In luxury of impatience. * * * *
That hour one horn, with long and solemn blast,
Went wailing up the heavens. *

* Salisbury—Sarisburga. Qy? Cæsaris-burga.

But those fond women hail that brazen sound
Joy's harbinger, sweet signal of return.
* * * * Steps are heard,
And figures indistinct are in the gloom
Advancing; yet no festal pomp, proclaimed
By music's merry breath; but mute and slow,
As from dark funeral. * * * * *
Saxon the first; how wearily slow they pass!
Still are they Saxon, Saxon still, the last
Saxon; in wonder they, nor yet in fear,
Question the dark air with their searching eyes,
Incredulous arraign the deepening gloom,
That with an envious melancholy shroud
Palls the long-looked for, late-returning. Them
Ah! deeper darkness covers; to their homes
Never more to return! Lo, all at once
The bloody knives, borne boastful, their red light
Flash murtherous! known is all ere aught is feared.
* * * * From these walls
At morn three hundred breathing valiant men
Went proudly forth!"

From this night of carnage, violation, and blood thou didst yet rise glorious, and shine forth like the sun after the nocturnal tempest, O Sorbiodunum, and becamest the residence of many Saxon kings! What warlike pomp, what regal show of power was exhibited in this palace to dazzle the eyes of the poor Saxons; who in after ages were in their turn compelled to submit

to the iron yoke of the Norman conqueror, when he summoned to this city all the great and noble of the land, to swear to him fealty and homage at the footstool of his sword-girt throne! His court was thronged with warriors of many nations, all striving to outvie each other in the military pomp of the day, in the number and splendid appearance of their vassals and retainers. What feats of chivalrous skill were then shown at the grand tournaments of Sarisburga before the delighted citizens, the princes and nobles of the kingdom, and all the flower of European knighthood! What sounding of trumpets, what waving of armorial banners, what rushing of barbed steeds within the lists, what ringing of shields, clashing of spears, and shouts of applause, were then heard from the battlements of this seat of kings! ——'Tis past! The walls and towers of Cæsar's palace are vanished, the regal chair of state is gone, and he that filled it in the pride of conquest and dominion, become dust! The war-accoutred knight, whose bosom was fired with martial courage and boundless ambition, is cold and regardless of his renown as the clods that rest on his mouldering bones: those multitudes that gazed with clamorous joy on the transient honours and achievements of the brave in arms, are

perished like the early flower, and vanished as the cloud before the hurrying blast: while the eye of maiden beauty, that shone like the morning star to behold the gallant deeds of its favoured knight, has long been set in eternal darkness!

This castle has also been the scene of domestic misery and the injustice of lawless power, when the haughty barons possessed an almost unlimited authority. Who that beholds these ramparts can forget the fair Countess of Salisbury, who in her lord's absence was confined in these towers by the usurping kinsman of her valiant husband, and threatened to be dragged a shrieking victim to the insulted altar of hymen. But the valiant Longue-Epée, a warrior of the sepulchre and the champion of the cross, long held a captive by the Saracens, and supposed to have been slain in fight, had now returned from the Holy Land. In the disguise of a weary and way-worn pilgrim, he gained admittance at eventide within those lofty gates. He found his beloved Countess still faithful to her honour: he overcame her ruthless persecutor, and released her from an odious captivity to the joys of connubial felicity in the arms of a beloved and long-absent husband.

But the curtain of oblivion hath dropped alike on all the scenes of private misery and suffering,

of imperial pomp and kingly domination, which successive ages, rolling on in their steadfast course, have here revealed. The grand drama of historical and national events has closed on thee, O Sorbiodunum, for ever! The acts of kings and the decrees of awful senates shall never more be recorded within thy walls! Yet enough of thy former greatness still remains to tempt the lover of antiquity to visit thee at the pale hour of evening, when the shadow of thy renown awakens in his bosom an imperishable interest; when the departed spirits of the mighty dead glide around thine eternal ramparts, and sigh with him in concert over thy loneliness and desolation!

I returned to Salisbury and slept, and set off from thence early in the morning, and reached L—— the same night,—a distance of thirty-nine miles. Thus I had been enabled to walk the whole of my journey. It was nearly the dead hour of midnight, when I once more reached my native village. The moon shone brightly on the embowered spot, as with a throbbing heart I entered its precincts. All was perfect silence. The trees were motionless, and not one vagrant breeze could be heard to sigh amid their many-coloured foliage. The inmates of every cottage were buried in sweet oblivious sleep. Happy, happy

villagers, your ignorance and situation spare you all the heart-rending miseries that genius is destined to endure. In the way to my own house, I had to pass the vicarage in which I was born, and where my parents had lived so many years. It lay a little out of the road, and I turned to go up to the gate that led into the flower-garden; but what was my surprise to mark the desolation around me. The paling was partly broken down, the flowers were all dug up, and their beds, that used to be so neat, trampled under foot; the shrubs were nearly all cut down, and the honeysuckle and lilac bowers destroyed: even the venerable yew-tree, more ancient than the house itself, some wanton and unsparing hand had barbarously mutilated,—every thing appeared disordered or destroyed! My heart sunk within me. I went to a window of the parlour, and as the moonlight streamed in from the opposite side, I felt my fears confirmed. The room was cheerless and naked, stripped of every thing, and all was silence, dreariness, and desolation. "My parents are dead!" I exclaimed in an agony: "my dear-loved mother is in her grave! And shall I never see her more? O, why was I not permitted to smooth her dying pillow, and receive her last blessing!" A violent burst of

tears relieved the poignancy of my distress, and with difficulty could I drag myself from the melancholy spot. A thousand recollections rose in my mind. Here had past my infant days in peace and happiness; here my boyhood and youth, full of ardent expectations, bright hopes, and longings after fame and a knowledge of the world. Now am I returned;—and what has that knowledge produced?

In the midst of this misery I felt most anxious, yet fearful to proceed to my own home. In a few minutes, however, I reached the cottage. A light was burning in Maria's room. Ah! thought I, there is the chamber of sickness, perhaps she is unable to rise and let me in. With a misgiving hand I lifted the knocker of the door; an inquiring voice was quickly heard. It was Maria's, and I felt revived. The door was hastily opened, and we rushed into each others arms. Where is my little boy? is he alive? And my parents, are they both dead? and I sunk into a chair exhausted. No words can speak the anguish I endured at learning the death of a valued father, and of friends the most disinterested—Mr. and Mrs. Banister. Nor could I hear without indignant emotions the harsh determination of the curate, which had ejected my

relatives from a residence they had for so many years uninterruptedly enjoyed, to make room for more favoured persons. Painfully contending emotions shook my frame, tears —due to the memory of those for whom they flowed—wetted my cheek, and it seemed vain to hope for one gleam of consolation. But a beloved wife, the most affectionate of mothers, and my little Edwin were yet spared me, and I was grateful. Anxious to behold my child, I hastened to the chamber; I saw him smiling unconscious in his happy slumbers; my burning lips pressed his rosy cheek, and I felt—what a fond father's heart alone can know.

On my way hither, I saw a newspaper advertisement, announcing the intention of Mr. Colburn to publish a series of Rejected Plays, and inviting authors to transmit to him their pieces. This to me was joyful tidings. The day after my arrival here, I sent up a fair copy of my last Drama; and the Editor, after requesting by letter permission for some curtailment, has promised that it shall speedily be brought before the public. Thus, though I have ever failed with the stage, I have at length succeeded with the press. With the copy of some lines, written since my return, I shall conclude my letter.

THE DORSET HERMIT.

After the cruel martyrdom of Edmund, King of East Anglia, by the Danes in 870, his brother, terrified at the horrible calamities of the times, fled into Dorsetshire, and there lived an hermitical life on bread and water. —*Vide Malmsb* 250, and *Brompton* 807.

Who comes from his cavern of rocks and green moss,
To kneel at the foot of yon rudely carved cross,
That stands in the forest of Purbeck's deep vale,*
Where the oak spreads its shade, and the blossoms so pale
Of the hawthorn commingle with the wild-briar rose,
That guards with its thorn the wood-dove's repose?
'Tis Edwin the Hermit, of Odin's famed line,
To whom the fierce northmen pay honours divine;
His kindred of regal descent are no more;
His gold sceptered brother lies drenched in his gore.

Peace eternal to the soul
Of the martyred Anglian king:
Thou hast reached the shining goal,
Thou hast heard the welcoming
Of the seraph-choir on high,
As thy spirit upward rose,
Cleaving yon ethereal sky
In car of fire, triumphantly
Scorning all thy savage foes!
Peace eternally be thine
Brother of a kingly line!

* Edwald is said to have taken up his abode near Cerne, where Ailmer afterwards founded a monastery of the Benedictine order.

Thou a nobler realm hast won;
And a richer diadem,
Brighter than earth's brightest gem,
Splendid as the beam o' th' sun,
Blazes on thy sainted brow:
And thy hands, a golden bough
Of the martyr's palm doth grace,
Greatest of thy godlike race.
Peace eternally be thine,
Brother of a sceptred line!

Still, still do I the ruthless Danes behold,
The blood fiends! as they bound thee to a tree,
My dear-loved brother. Still the lash I hear
That to the bones laid bare thy quivering flesh.
I see their arrows reeking with thy blood.
But thou endauredst it bravely, and to scorn
Didst laugh their fellest malice, till on high
Gleamed the keen battle-axe, and on the ground
Rolled thy gore-clotted head.*
Peace eternally be thine,
Brother born of kingly line.

Pomp of earth, a long farewell!
Sceptre, diadem, and throne,
Warlike trump and battle-swell,
Shout victorious, foeman's groan,
Panoply and guard of state,
Banner, shield, and sword of fate,

* This was the exact manner of St. Edmund's death.

Pride of kings, a long farewell!
Here a hermit will I dwell;
Here before this cross of stone
Bow in adoration down,
When the morning's roseate gleam
Smiles upon yon wandering stream,
When the star o' th' west appears,
And the flowers are bathed in tears.

My drink shall be only the blue-gushing spring,
My food the wild herbs of the forest and field;
Far sweeter to me than the feast of a king,
Whose banquets of splendour no comfort can yield.

No more shall these eyes the horrid death-flash
Behold of the brand that gives the blood-gash;
No more shall the war-horn and trumpet's deep wail
Disturb my repose in this leafy lone vale.

No more shall I hear the brazen shields ring,
Nor the yell of the pirate and the savage sea-king;
Nor death-song of Odin o'er captives fresh slain,
To the harp of the Scald on the war-covered plain.

To the cross when I kneel, my music shall be
The hymn of the birds on the verdant oak-tree;
My canopy of state the honey-suckle flower,
That breathes its rich balm to the bright morning hour.

The roe-buck and fawn my companions shall be,
And the purple-winged dove, with her soft minstrelsey,

Amid the green bowers shall soothe me all day,
Till the nightingale chants her sweet moonlighted lay;
And as on my couch of dead leaves I recline,
The ocean's wild organ wakes its many-tuned chime.*

Believe me, dear Frank,
Yours in eternal friendship,
SYLVATICUS.

* A passage in Aldhelm's Poem *De laude Virginium*, clearly proves that the organ was known to the Anglo-Saxons in the seventh century.

LETTER LXIV.

Chepstow, Monmouthshire.

DEAR FRANK,

MY present address I am sure will much surprise you. What an eternal wanderer am I become! I have been again driven from my peaceful home, where I had fondly hoped I should have been enabled some way or other, at least for a certain period, to have resided. But alas! I had scarcely rested one month in humble and happy quiet, ere the horrible terror of being balloted for a common soldier in the county militia, hurried me once more I knew not whither. Maria urged my speedy flight, and on the 27th at midnight, I again quitted with only one pound in my pocket, my home, my family, my all, in search of an uncertain and remote situation!

O, my friend, I have already spoken of parting from a wife, a child, and a mother; but this farewell seemed yet more touching, more heart-rending than any before. I neither can, nor shall attempt to describe what agony of mind I endured as I turned my back on my home, and left my

native village buried in sleep behind me. I passed the churchyard; I found my father's grave; I threw myself on it, and bathed the green sods with my tears. The night became an emblem of my fate,—dark, wild, and stormy. Peace to the ashes of my father; farewell my poor widowed mother; farewell my wife, my child, perhaps for ever! I arose, and wandered on like a troubled ghost through the gloom. I had not proceeded far, before the rain fell in torrents; and the tempest continued unpityingly to roar around me, as I crossed the bleak and desolate heath. Ah me! I deeply sighed amid the storm, when will my sufferings end; when shall I be at peace for ever? After enduring the pelting of the angry heavens for nearly two hours, I found a cold shelter beneath some spreading pines till daylight; and then calling on a relative, a rich farmer, I was enabled to change and dry my clothes. Cold was my reception in the house of this man of wealth; and had he been made acquainted with the sorrows that preyed on my heart, it would have been still colder. I soon quitted his roof, and continued on my journey. In two days I reached Bath, where I slept at a small but decent public inn, not very far from the Abbey. In the morning I rose, at no early

hour, and to my mortification found that a person who slept in an adjoining bed, had taken away my hat, and left a very old and shabby one in its place. Inquiry and expostulation were alike vain, and I was compelled to purchase a new one, which lowered my finances to three or four shillings. After diligently seeking for every information respecting theatrical companies in the neighbourhood of Bath, I quickly left that city for Thornbury; my expectations, however, of finding performers in that town were not realized. I passed on to Gloucester, where I met with a similar disappointment, and my money was now all spent. I had no heart or spirit to visit any of the antiquities of that once "Bright City" of the Romanized Britons. I quitted it the following morning for Chepstow, in Monmouthshire, where I was informed I should most certainly find the theatre open. On my reaching the bridge of Gloucester, I found a toll-gate erected, through which no one was permitted to pass without paying a penny. I unfortunately had not a single copper left, and the gate-keeper sturdily refused to let me proceed. As I stood pondering on the means by which to go forward, a gentleman and his servant, on horseback, approached, boldly rode through, and refused to

pay either for himself or attendant. Handing his card of address, he told the keeper that if the corporation of Gloucester chose to erect new bridges, they should pay the expenses themselves; and not attempt to levy a tax on the public without the aid of parliament. While the toll-gatherer and the gentleman were thus in altercation, I took an opportunity of rushing through the gate unobserved, and went on my way without further molestation.

In the evening I reached the village of ———, about five miles from Chepstow. This was the second day that I had gone almost without food, and I now found myself exceedingly sick and faint; to add to my miserable situation, I was wholly without the means of procuring a bed for the night, and seemed utterly unable to proceed any further. As I passed through the village, disconsolate and wretched, I saw a respectable-looking academy for young gentlemen. I determined to call, and if I saw one trait of humanity in the countenance of the master, to discover to him the unhappy situation I was in, and request a night's lodging. Under such impressions as few, I believe, have ever felt, I summoned up sufficient resolution to knock at the door.

A servant ushered me into the parlour, where

I saw the master, Mr. ——. He was busied in making preparations for his young gentlemen to perform the tragedy of *Adelgitha*. I felt my heart revive. I told him my situation,—told him I had been an assistant in a school, and purposed joining a company of comedians at Chepstow. "Can you draw?" said he. "I can." "Sit down and take your tea, my fine fellow; then go to the inn, have a comfortable bed, and in the morning come and give my daughter a lesson or two in drawing; I will pay you for it, and feel obliged to you too." O, my friend, I could use many florid similes to aid the description of my feelings, but how flat, how insipid would they all seem to experienced reality. I found this gentleman companionable and intelligent, without the least spice of the pedagogue. He told me he intended to play Lothaire, in Lewis's tragedy, himself, though certes he had a much better figure and face for the tyrant Michael Ducas.

I went to the inn, slept comfortably, and the next day, after giving the young lady a lesson or two in drawing, proceeded on my way to Chepstow, repeating to myself the following beautiful lines of Langhorne.

"Through Error's maze, through Folly's night,
The lamp of Reason lends me light;

Where stern Affliction waves her rod,
My heart confides in thee my God!
When Nature shrinks, oppressed with woes,
E'en then she finds in thee repose.
To thee my humble voice I raise;
Forgive, while I presume to praise.

Affliction flies, and Hope returns,
Her lamp with brighter splendour burns;
Gay Love, with all his smiling train,
And Peace and Joy are here again!
These, these I know 'twas thine to give;
I trusted, and behold, I live!
To thee my humble voice I raise,
Forgive, while I presume to praise.

O, may I still thy favour prove!
Still grant me gratitude and love!
Let truth and virtue guard my heart,
Nor peace, nor hope, nor joy depart!
But yet, whate'er my life may be,
My heart shall still repose on thee!
To thee my humble voice I raise,
Forgive, while I presume to praise.

I am, dear Frank,
Yours, &c.
SYLVATICUS.

LETTER LXV.

Chepstow.

My Kind Friend,

I found in this town a pretty full company, and was immediately engaged by the manager. I opened in the part of Sir Edward Mortimer, in *The Iron Chest*, and succeeded beyond my hopes. So favourable a reception did not fail to call forth a world of envy against me among the performers; and I have to reckon among my bitterest foes, an actor named Harvey, who plays the first line of business here, and who boasts of the friendship of Kean, and talks fully of an engagement on the Drury-Lane boards for the coming season.

I have now the pleasure to inform you, my friend, that my play of G—— is at length published. The remarks of the Editor, I am sure, will afford you gratification. But *miserere nobis!* what a cutting and paring away have I found in the drama, as it now stands; while the close of the piece is so curtailed, that I scarcely knew it, and all the interest and stage-effect, on which I

prided myself not a little, are completely swept away. I am resolved, however, to try its success on the stage, even as it is, and take it for my benefit. The manager favours my wishes, and a respectable young man, and the daughter of Mr. —— of this town, have undertaken to perform in it two principal characters. But hear the London critic.—

"In this Drama, the author appears to have contended against the force of his own genius. Out of some accidental respect for the outrageous productions of the German school, he seems to have resisted the natural flow of a rich poetical vein; and, with the possession of that discriminative power in the delineation of character, which is the true dramatic faculty, he has attempted, as it were in spite of himself, to produce a story full of improbabilities. G—— is, we understand, a juvenile essay. It certainly affords proofs of a free and vigorous fancy, sufficient to warrant us in saying, that if the author will repress his taste for the morbid violence of passion, and endeavour to regulate his compositions by the severer laws of the drama, he will not fail to produce some interesting and beautiful work.

"In the plot, the reader will probably see a considerable resemblance to that of *The Castle*

Spectre; and although the story may not be so well developed, it will not be denied that in poetical conception, the serious parts of the dialogue are far superior to any thing in Mr. Lewis's play." This is the first time any production of mine has endured the ordeal of criticism: its kindness and encouragement, by me cannot easily be forgotten.

But I would fain give you, my friend, some description of this place and its pleasant neighbourhood. You have read Bloomfield's *Banks of the Wye;* but O, how feebly and slightly does he paint its innumerable and singular beauties. I yesterday went with a friend, to visit the delightful grounds of Piercefield. The romantic scenery of this paradise of the west, beggars all my powers of description: I can only present you with a feeble outline of its varied and transporting features. Fancy, then, to yourself, a crystal river, with boats and barges floating up and down its deep but gentle waters, winding in perpetual mazes betwixt marble-coloured cliffs, in many places immense and precipitous, and clothed with forests of various trees clad in the richest verdure; hollow glades cast into the deepest shade, and forming an exquisite relief to the sun-lit mountain and silvery sparkling here

and there of the partially illuminated waves; river-banks sprinkled with a thousand flowers, and lined with groves that seemed the sacred haunt of nymphs and rural gods; heaven-assailing rocks that formed to the wondering eye a naked range of bastioned walls, embattled towers, and gothic turrets; an immense amphitheatre of steep precipices, surrounding islets, and peninsulas of eternal green, adorned with grove-embowered cottages and hedge-rows of elms and honey-suckles, encircled by the bending of the noble stream; while from other parts the delighted eye beholds the same river flowing on in its serpentine course to the majestic Severn, the town and bridge of Chepstow bestriding the rapid current, with numerous ships in the distance, and the dark and ponderous towers of the castle of Strongbow; while far beyond them the mighty Severn and the remote shores of Somerset appear fading into dimness amid the soft clouds of the blue horizon. In short, all the striking grandeur of Alpine scenery appears delightfully mingled, in this charming wilderness, with the softer beauties of the lowland landscape, forming a richer paradise than the far-famed vale of Tempè, —a sweeter retreat than the lovely valley of Bayder, the Crimean Arcadia!

But who, my dear Frank, can pace these lawns and woody avenues, without dropping a tear to the memory of the noble, the benevolent, and too hospitable Valentine Morrice. Here he wandered when he took his last farewell of this enchanting scene, whose surprising beauties were by him improved and first made known to the world. O, in that hour, what must have been his feelings! Driven by an excess of noble liberality and charity to quit his country, and this his beloved retreat, as the carriage that bore him from hence for ever past through yonder town, he was followed by the tears, the prayers, and blessings of the wretched and the indigent; and as he crossed yon bridge, and caught a last parting glimpse of these variegated bowers that surrounded his once-beloved home, the muffled bells of Chepstow tower rung out a mournful adieu to the benefactor and friend of mankind: the echoes of the cliffs repeated the melancholy voice of grief, and the hanging woods sighed back the heart-breaking sounds. This was too much. His fortitude, that had hitherto borne him up, now gave way, and he burst into a flood of tears. He retired to the West Indies; but misfortune still pursuing him, he returned to his native land to languish miserably in a prison. The wife of his bosom,

who sold all her clothes and jewels to purchase bread, became through excess of grief deprived of reason; and he was released, after years of confinement, but a short period before death kindly closed his tale of accumulated sufferings. Alas, poor Morrice! I involuntarily sighed, as I quitted the lovely bowers of Piercefield.

We now made the best of our way to the noble ruins of Tintern Abbey. This venerable pile is situated in a deep dell, luxuriantly wooded, on the banks of the Wye. The exterior promised little; but I cannot express what I felt, when a portal in the great western door was thrown open for our entrance, and the grand though ruined cathedral with its "lengthened aisles," its colonades of gothic pillars, and magnificent eastern window,—one of the finest in Europe,—appeared in long and sublime perspective to my view. The abbey is roofless, but the walls are nearly perfect, and the noble window above the western entrance, with all its multiform tracery, is yet beautifully preserved from the slowly crumbling and destructive hand of time.

The rubbish having been carefully removed from the level of the abbey, a fine carpet of vivid green sward covers the whole area, from which the light-clustered shafts, the massy columns in

the centre on which rested the tower, and the lofty and pointed arches of the noblest architecture, rise with a most singular and fine effect Around many of the elegant pillars the rustling ivy luxuriantly wove its dark-green festoons,—the garland with which antiquity binds its venerable brows,—and above the upper range of windows numerous shrubs, waving their branches on the plaintive breeze, flung a melancholy shadow over the stately ruin. On the fore-ground lay piled in heaps the mutilated column, the arabesque capital, the archivolt moulding, the headless effigy of the abbot, and the limb-lopped statue of the renowned hero,—faded memorials of once-venerated sanctity and warlike pomp! And as the delighted eye glanced through the eastern window, the wood-clothed hills on the opposite banks of the Var, whose tops were richly tinged with the glowing tints of an evening sky, while below a sombre gloom enveloped their bowery skirts, appeared with an imposing and solemn effect, and gave an exquisite finishing to the inimitable picture.

This abbey, in the form of a cross, is two hundred and thirty feet in length from east to west, while the transept is a hundred and sixty. It was founded in 1131 for Cistercian monks, by

Walter de Clare; and in William of Worcester it is said, that in 1268 the abbot and monks for the first time entered the choir and performed divine service, where yonder the high altar stood; refulgent with gold, illumined with blazing tapers, and redolent with smoking incense and blooming flowers.

It was evening as we entered the abbey, which rendered the effect doubly impressive. The notes of the solemn organ floated not along the choir; but there were twilight melodies in the air, that seemed the mysterious hymn of other days. The plaintive voice of the evening winds, gently waving the foliage that mantled the lofty arches and shadowy walls, mingled with the soft murmurs of the neighbour-waves; while in the ash, that spread its branches over the northern transept, the thrush sweetly warbled his farewell hymn to departing day. I stood wrapt in indescribable musings, oppressed with sensations not easily defined: and, as I suddenly turned to the east, the full moon rose above the forest heights on the opposite banks of the romantic Wye, and shed its soft, sweet, melancholy light over the sublime and shadowy pile. O, what a scene, cried I, for the painter and the poet! Then it was that I beheld, through the telescope of fancy,

the proud cathedral restored to all its ancient splendour. Its tombs were re-edified, its superb chantries rose again in all their gothic adornments, the statues of Norman heroes reposed on their sepulchres, and the cross-legged knight and pilgrim-warrior lay in funereal state amid its shadowy aisles, while the feudal banner streamed down the walls in consecrated pride. The grand altar blazed with gems; the luminaries shed their sacred beams through the enlightened concave of the vaulted choir; pilgrims from distant lands knelt before the golden shrines, and the sanctuary shone with the awe-inspiring pomp of ecclesiastical processions.

"Tapers bright
Through lofty windows pour their light;
And raised by chanting quires, a sound
Celestial spreads a charm around.
Here, amid soothing solitude,
In vales romantic, silent, rude,
Religion, shrined in holy walls,
And watching every bead that falls,
Shall wean the beating heart from pain,
And still the wild tumultuous vein;
Shall spread around the faded face
Her holy calm, her solemn grace;
And touch the soul with heavenly fires,
Midst echoing aisles and raptured quires."

How long I might have lingered at such an hour, in such a scene as then presented itself before me, had not my friend taking me by the arm reminded me it was time to retire, I cannot tell. With a heavy sigh for the irrevocable fate of all created glory, I quitted the abbey; and no pilgrim with scollop-shell and sandal-shoon who had passed its portal in days of yore, e'er felt more regret at quitting its sacred threshold, than I did at that moment.

We now strolled for half an hour on the chequered banks of the Wye. What pencil can delineate the softness and beauty of its enchanting scenery;—the silvery tints of the mountain forests, the deep shadows of the hills on one side, and their moon-enlighted brightness on the other; the quivering gleam of the waters, where the orb of night looked full upon them in all her radiance, and their deep-blue dimness where the sombre shades of forest, cliff, and rocky tor fell like a funereal pall on their low murmuring waves. Above the trees that surrounded it, the ruins of the cathedral proudly rose with the most picturesque effect; nor was there wanting music to complete the witchery of the hour: the nightingale embowered amid the abbey groves, sung sweetly mournful o'er the decaying ruins; while

the winds sighed in concert a wildly mysterious hymn, amid the hollows of the rocks and woods. Methought, as I stood on the river's bank, the tinkling of the vesper-bell of the royal Hermit floated softly down the stream, and mingled with the harmony of the breeze.

In the seventh century, Tewdric, king of Glamorgan, gave up to his son Mowric his throne and sceptre; and on these embowered shores, amid the rocks of Tintern, dwelt a holy solitaire.

"A little lowly hermitage it was,
Down in a dale, hard by a forest side,
Far from resort of people that did pass
In travel to and fro, a little wide
There was a little chapel edified,
Wherein the hermit duly went to say
His holy things each morn and eventide:
Thereby a crystal stream did gently play,
Which from a sacred fountain welled forth away."

But the tones of the war-horn awoke the echoes of this lovely solitude, and called him again to the palace and the field. The Saxon king of Wessex had crossed the Severn, and triumphed over the oppressed Cymry.* Tewdric listened to

* Betwixt Tintern and Monmouth is a lofty mountain called *the Kymin*, which no doubt derives its name from the Cymry, or Kimbri, and proves they were the original possessors of this island.

the voice of his people, and laid aside his ascetic weeds for the steel-locked vest and the sword of battle. He met the Saxon foe on the banks of the Wye; he drove them from his kingdom; and compelled the pagan hordes to re-cross the Severn. "A mortal wound," says a modern author now before me, "arrested him in the full enjoyment of his glory; and he breathed his last wishes for his country's safety at the confluence of the Severn and the Wye. The local appellation Mathern, the abbreviation of Merthyr Tewdric,* pointed out his remains to the sympathy of posterity. In the sixteenth century his body was found unconsumed, and the fatal blow on his head was visible." Should time permit, I intend making a pilgrimage to his tomb. Highly delighted with our day's excursion, of which I have attempted some account, we now returned from our evening walk to the Beaufort Arms at Tintern, where we slept.

I am, as usual,
with every friendly regard,
Yours,
SYLVATICUS.

* The martyr Tewdric. Usher quotes the Register of Landaff for this conflict, p. 562; Langhorn, Chron. p. 148.

LETTER LXVI.

Chepstow.

DEAR FRANK,

ON the evening before last, it fell to my lot to take my benefit here. I believe I told you in a former letter, that I intended to take my own play of G—— for that night. I did so; and the novelty in a provincial town of the piece being written by the actor for whose benefit it was to be performed, together with two persons of the place appearing on the stage for the first time, contributed not a little to fill the theatre. The anxiety of an author on the first night of his piece, is far easier to be imagined than described. I slept but little the night previous to its appearance, and was the first at its rehearsal the next morning; when I found that the manager had deceived me, and instead of playing the principal comic part for which he had announced himself in the bills, he had given it to a boy, the son of Goddard, one of my greatest enemies. The young volunteers from the town were very perfect in their characters; but how the rest of the

company and their parts in the play were acquainted, it was no easy matter to judge, as they merely read through their speeches.

The long wished for, yet dreaded hour, at length arrived. The bell rang, the curtain drew up, and the play commenced. The first scene, which though of little consequence, was a sad prelude of what was to follow. Of the second scene I will give you an extract from the printed copy, as a specimen of the serious parts of the drama.

Rozzario. My father brings Lavenia here to-day,
The gay and beauteous daughter of a duke,
To be my bride. But no, that cannot be.
My love, my plighted faith, my honour pledged,
All, all forbid it! Lovely, beauteous flower!
Ethereal plant of heaven! that blooms so sweetly
On the bleak shady bank of penury,
I'll move thee hence into eternal sunshine,
No more to feel the chilling blasts of want.

Enter STEPHANO.

Thou much-loved partner of my joys and cares!
Not the white cliffs around his native land,
Which the returning exile's hope-cheered eye
In distant prospect greet, from the green waves
Dim rising as the vessel homeward glides,
Can conjure up in his enraptured soul
Emotions dear as those this bosom feels

At sight of thee. For since that night of triumph,
When on the plains of Zara thou didst fly,
The Pagan tents, and joined the Christian arms,
And me from foul assassination saved,
Thy merits in my breast have lighted up
Friendship's pure flame, that every day burns brighter.

Steph. It is, and will be aye a mutual warmth,
Since you with one so lowly can vouchsafe
The heart-consoling interchange of friendship.

Roz. The life you saved, I swear, is wholly thine.

Steph. Then by that life which Heaven through me preserved,
By sacred friendship, by thy fame, I charge thee
Tell me the cause of that mysterious sadness,
Which has of late embittered all thy hours.
Ah! is it love? who with his golden shaft
Stabs keener than the iron knife of murder?*

Roz. Since our arrival at this stately castle
Some weeks ago, I chanced in pensive mood
Alone to wander westward of its towers,
Through a sequestered vale.
There, on a mossy bank with cowslips decked,
That in a lake their painted image kissed,
I saw a nymph, whose beauty, though arrayed
In humble garb, shone with celestial charms,
Like heaven's bright sunbeams gilding a dark cloud.
A snow-white flock she tended, which by her side,
Beneath the verdant shade, on violets couched.

* The two following lines stood in the original MS. but were omitted by the Editor.

Yet with the wound instils Hope's cordial balm,
Till softened every pang to rapture turns.

But O, ye powers! when from the willow boughs
Her lute she took, and to some plaintive air
Tuned the sweet strings, the minstrels of the grove,
Who to the setting sun's mild drowsy eye
Their gaudy plumage spread, sat mute to listen.
The sleeping zephyrs woke to fan her bosom,
And wantoned sportive with her golden tresses;
While Echo murmured at the harmonious notes
She could not mimic with her utmost skill.

Steph. Humph! Ha! I foresee what's coming.

Roz. O! her lovely fingers
The tuneful chords touched with so soft a cadence,
As evening winds breathe on th' Æolian harp,
When swan-like on the strings they die in music.

These two characters were cast to Harvey and Goddard. Harvey knew not the ghost of a line, (to use a theatrical phrase) and Goddard was reeling drunk. Only think of the agonies I endured to hear these two wretches, ignorant as the veriest clown of the plough, vomiting forth their ungrammatical jargon and vilest ribaldry, and endeavouring to the utmost of their power to turn the whole into ridicule. Some other parts of the piece, wherein I appeared myself, supported by two or three of those who were perfect in their characters, redeemed in some measure the disgrace into which it must otherwise have wholly fallen; and though the rest of the performers,

from beginning to end, strove to the utmost of their power totally to damn it, yet several scenes notwithstanding were crowned with triumphant applause; and the envy of my unmerited enemies became so obvious, that several gentlemen in the boxes declared to the manager they should like to see them receive for their reward a good ducking in the Wye. Thus ended, after years of disappointment, the first appearance of one of the dramatic productions of my pen on the stage! *Manet altâmente repôstum.*

Before I close this letter, I fain would give you a slight description of Chepstow, or Estrighoel castle. It is the remains of an immense and magnificent fortress, situated to the north west of the town on the brow of a steep and rocky precipice, beneath which the Wye flows onward to the Severn, and where the water, at full tide, rises nearly fifty feet. To the south, on the land-side, it is surrounded with a vast wall and massy towers of surprising strength, and their dilapidated, though still lofty battlements are crowned with a forest of shrubs and widely spreading trees. The entrance is flanked by two large circular towers, but neither the drawbridge nor portcullis remain. The first court contains the ponderous, and what I conceive to have been the Saxon tower, and the original part of the

castle before the Norman additions. In the ample chambers of this tower, lived and died a prisoner at large, the regicide Henry Martin; here, though a state captive, he enjoyed that pleasure and liberty which his crimes were far from deserving. In this ward are also the grand baronial hall of state, the kitchen, and numerous other apartments. The second court is a garden: the third contains the chapel, a beautiful specimen of Norman architecture, the interior of which was once adorned with a fine range of statues; the niches in which they were placed are still perfect. The fourth ward, which has an entrance without the town wall, and over which is still to be seen the furnace for melting lead to pour down on the heads of the assailants, is separated by a moat and drawbridge from the rest of the castle. Camden and Dugdale consider William Fitzosborn, Earl of Hereford, to have been the founder of this castle. That it was erected by the Romans, as some antiquarians have asserted, is, I think, improbable. Be its ancient founders whom they may, scenes of feudal pomp and barbarous cruelty have repeatedly been enacted within its walls. How often has the Norman baron led forth from these gates his armed retainers and vassal bands, to ravage and desolate the Cambrian borders.

The neighbouring forest of Wentwood, those wild and strong recesses of the Britons, have often echoed to the war-horn of the Earl of Estrighoel; the banks of the winding Usk were died with the blood of warriors; the waves of the Rumney ran purple to the sea with gore. Then sang the bards of Cambria :—

" Being assembled for our country,
Let us elevate our banners above the mountains,
And push forward our forces over the borders;
And lift our spears above the warriors' heads,
And rush upon the destroyer in his army,
And slay both him and his followers ?"

The shouts of the Britons came

" Like a wave raging against the shore.
I saw the brave warriors in array;
And after the morning, how mangled !
I saw the tumult of the perishing hosts;
The blood springing forward and moistening the ground.
Wearied on the earth, no longer verdant,
I saw, at the pass of the ford,
The blood-stained men dropping their arms,
Pale with terror !
I admired the brave chief of Reged;
I saw his reddened brow,
When he rushed on his enemies;
Like the bird of rage was his sword on their bucklers:
It was wielded with deadly fate."

In yonder hall sat at the midnight banquet with the once-renowned Strongbow, the nephew, or great nephew of Fitzosborn, and his warlike guests, the lascivious Dermot, the tyrant king of Meath. Expelled his dominions for his injustice and cruelty, he here strongly solicited the aid of the powerful Norman Earl to reinstate him in his kingdom; promising to give him his daughter, the lovely Eva, for his bride, and acknowledge him the heir to his kingdom. The ambitious Strongbow, captivated with the prospect of a diadem, vowed to restore the exiled Dermot to his country and his throne. How rung the baronial hall at that hour with the din of Strongbow's warrior train, as they lifted their wine-cups and shouted, "Victory on the plains of Erin! A crown to the lord of Estrighoel!" In this saloon were concerted the plans that finally led to the subjugation of the kingdom of Ireland, and united that beautiful island for ever to the English diadem. Then were these walls hung with tapestry and shields of beamy gold; and where now the rank grass and tendrils of the rustling ivy wave on the breeze, glanced the trellised coat of mail and the rustred panoply of burnished steel, the barred helmet, the splendid surcoat of silvered satin, richly embroidered with armorial

bearings, and the proud banner of state that led the vassal ranks of the Norman to conquest.

'Tis vanished all! the obliterating wing of Time has swept over the castle, and the silence of death rests on its ruins! The exploits of chivalry and the scenes of love associated with these towers, which as they past, like the moving and beautiful delineations of a panorama, awoke a strong sensation and interest in the day of their renown, are all forgotten as though they had never been! Its heroes, beneath the flashings of whose eye a thousand slaves trembled with fear, while on their nod waited fire and sword, the ministers of their vengeance, are dust: and its high-born beauties, whose smile like the sun-beam on the morn-awakened flowers, won all hearts on whom it fell, have been for ages mouldered into ashes!

I am, dear Frank,
Yours, &c.
SYLVATICUS.

LETTER LXVII.

Brecon, South Wales.

MY EVER RESPECTED FRIEND,

I HAVE quitted the Chepstow company, which after the intolerable conduct I detailed in my last, you possibly have anticipated. The caprice and injustice of the manager and the unhandsome treatment of the performers rendered my situation comfortless, and I left them without regret.

I am now wandering, a lone pilgrim, in search of another theatrical establishment, towards Aberystwith, through the centre of South Wales, —that beautiful country of the bard and the harp, where every river, rock, and grove is to me interesting and sacred; for here the indigenous Britons, amid their mountains and forests, held out for ages against the invading Saxon. And here the sons of the ancient Cymry, the true offspring of the Celtic tribes of this island remain to the present day. In every wood I fancy I hear the wild mysterious harmony of the druid

lyre; by every isolated rock I seem to behold a band of oak-bound priests, performing their awful rites of sacrifice; and in every ruined castle-hall I view some British prince seated amid his household warriors at the banquet of mead, while the silver harp of his favorite bard rings with the heroic adventures of the sons of strife.

As I know you are familiar with Welsh scenery, I shall only give you a sketch of two or three of the principal places, which I have visited in my delightful though solitary pilgrimage; and first I shall speak of Caerleon, to visit which I departed considerably from my route. Quitting Caerwent, the Venta Silurum of Antonine, which now contains scarcely a Roman relic save its dilapidated walls,—the celebrated mosaic pavement being nearly all destroyed and vanished,—I was gratified by my visit to Caerleon;* once Isca Silurum, and a Roman colony on the banks of the Usk, or Isca. As I descended the steep brow of the adjacent hill to the miserable remains of this once-magnificent Romo-British city, I could not but exclaim aloud, "Where, O Colonia, are thy lofty walls, which Giraldus tells us were

* Owen affirms its name to be derived from the union of two rivers;—Caer Llion,—the city of waters: but more probably from Caer and Leon, —the corruption of Legion,—the city of the legion.

three miles in circumference? where are all thy splendid palaces with their glittering roofs of gold, their noble porticoes, their tessellated halls and exquisite statuary? where are thy pillared temples, thy tepid baths, thy inscriptive altars, thy curious fountains, thy marble aqueducts, thy imperial amphitheatres, and thy gigantic towers? Vanished with their builders! and a poor scattered village is all that remains of thy former greatness, thou who sat'st the queen of the western Cymry, the sovereign of Britannia Secunda;* thou who wast strong and mighty for the battle, whose gates were wont to be thronged with passing multitudes, and thy streets with the marshalled ranks of the Augustine legion, whose plume-heaped helmets of steel and golden eagles of war cast a reflected blaze along the walls of thy palaces,—how art thou spoiled! Thy proud hosts are gone down to the slaughter, and all thy nobles to the land of shadows! Renowned daughter of Silurum, how art thou fallen from thy glory! The noise of the stamping of thy strong war-steeds is heard no more in thy desolate streets; the rumbling of thy chariot-wheels shall no more disturb the dreary quietness of thy ruins! Here has been indeed a spoiling

* See Richard of Cirencester.

and a great destruction! The standard floats no longer on thy tower of strength, thy broad walls are utterly broken down, and thy lofty gates consumed with fire; thy mighty men sleep a perpetual sleep, unmindful of thy widowed state; thy warriors, thy captains and rulers are all gone down to forgetfulness!

The original Roman walls, like those of all the stations of that people, formed a parallelogram, though but of small dimensions when compared with the accounts we have of its suburbs, which are said by many to have been nine miles in circumference. Some of the naked fragments of these walls, all deprived of their facings, are yet to be seen more than thirteen feet in height, and twelve feet in thickness. This was once an archi-episcopal see, and here was also established a splendid British university. Alas! not a trace remains of its colleges, its metropolitan cathedral, churches, or convents! Where now are the Roman roads, those noble monuments of that mighty people's art and power, which led from hence to so many stations in the most distant parts of the island? Where is the Julian way, that like a chain connected thee, O Isca Colonia, with the City of the Sun,* and the remote towers

Bath.

of Monapia on the storm-beat shores of the Vergivian sea?* The diligent eye of the antiquarian can scarcely trace a vestige remaining, where the steel-girt legions passed in glittering array; and the cohorts of horse in long and martial line pranced proudly to the enlivening melody of the Roman trumpet, the powerful cymbals, with their flute and hoop of jingling rings,† the deep-toned horn, and the warlike bagpipes.‡

One or two melancholy relics still remain;—the shattered walls of the citadel, the immense tower mentioned by Giraldus. It stood on a very lofty rock or natural mound, much like the Phœnician-British castle of Launcéston, and must have been of a prodigious height. This fortress I conceive to have been originally of Celtic construction, long before the Roman invasion, like many others in this island, built after the Phœnician and Syrian manner. This keep the Romans made use of for their prœtorium, and surrounded it with a lower oblong court, according to the usual form of their castramentations.

* The sea to the south of Ireland. † Found in the ruins of Herculaneum.

‡ This musical instrument is very ancient, and was known to the Hebrews. Speaking of finding among certain ruins in this country, a bronze figure of a Roman soldier playing on a pair of bagpipes, King says "It most clearly ascertains the use and existence of this instrument amongst the Romans, on their very first arrival in this island."

Here dwelt, after the departure of that people, the regal chiefs of the Silures, the princes of the ancient Cymryan blood of Greffith, who were denominated the Kings of Gwent, and Lords of Caerleon. Here King Henry with his army, as he marched to the conquest of Ireland, was received in state by Rhys, the prince of South Wales, and feasted in the halls of British chivalry. What tales of deeds heroic were then told and sung within these walls! What carousals, what lifting of the wassail-bowl, what draining of the gold-bound hirlass! What valorous boastings, what hopes of conquest, plunder, fame, and sword-won domains in Erin's distant and then almost unknown kingdoms, did those fierce Norman warriors entertain, who then in martial pomp thronged this ancient fortress. The tales of Roman conquests, to whose power the whole island once submitted, were to them strange legends of antiquity; and now, behold! the distance of ages has placed them also and their proud achievements on the dim horizon of past-time; where they mingle with all those who have gone before them, and scarce a single figure, however once enveloped with military glory, can be distinguished from the deep dim mass of sinking shadows!

There is yet another remain I must mention to you,—the grand amphitheatre, which you may be assured I did not forget to visit. It has several ranges of stone seats yet remaining, though covered with soil and turf; on one of those I sat wrapt in delicious reverie, till all the Roman grandeur of theatric pomp enveloped me as in a cloud of glory, and the sternly awful forms of the mighty conquerors of Britain came before me; while——

[*The remainder of this letter is torn off and lost; as is also the epistle that should have followed the next in order, and referred to in the following page.*]

LETTER LXVIII.

Aberystwith.

DEAR FRANK,

IN my last I gave you an account of my strolling to Usk, the Burrium of antiquity, through which ran the Roman road from Caerleon to Viroconium, now Wroxeter, of its fine old bridge, its moulder-ing castle, the remains of its priory, and the noble encampment of Craeg-y-gareyd* about a mile to the west of the town; from which the distant mountains round Abergavenny, the sky-assailing Sugarloaf, the majestic Skyrridd Vawr with its forked summit amid the clouds, and the proudly swelling Blorenge tipt with a wreath of flowing gold by the beams of the descending sun, formed a prospect on one side of most peculiar grandeur: nor was it without its corresponding

* I am now convinced that this camp, the irregular entrenchments of which are thrown up on the summit of a precipice, that if I remember rightly is covered with wood, is not Roman as some authors suppose, but the strong and ancient hill-city of the Britons. There are seven large barrows within the ramparts, which sufficiently speak its origin. The Romans built their station of Burrium, or Usk, at some distance (like Dur-novaria) from the British town, and near the water side; the Celtic cities being made their summer camps.

sublimity to the east, where an immensity of hill, and dale, and plain stretched far away towards Hereford and Gloucester, spotted with sunshine and dimness; while the sweet valley, through which the Usk meandered amid its delicious and beautiful scenery, reposed in the deep shade of that delightful picture with the most enchanting effect.

How much do I regret that I could not visit the superb ruins of Raglan castle; but time nor circumstance would permit me to go far out of my road. On my arrival at Abergavenny, another Roman station, the Gobannium of Antoninus, I immediately went to visit its castle. It stands to the south of the town on the banks of the river, and has been a scene of deep and bloody treachery. William de Braose, who was lord also of Brecon, after having been here taken prisoner with his vassals and retainers by the brave Cambrian prince, Sitfylt ap Dyfnwald, and again set at liberty with all his possessions restored to him, invited the Welch prince and his son to a grand banquet in the halls of this Norman castle. Behold the feast prepared in barbaric pomp, the mead cup merrily circling among the unsuspicious guests; while amid the pauses of vociferous mirth, the harp of the minstrel is heard striking a prelude to the legendary war-song. In

that hour of false joy and treacherous hospitality, the dark-browed chief of the Normans, as Dyfnwald lifted the hirlass of hydromel to his lips, arose from his seat, and plunged the assassin's dagger into the bosoms of the innocent prince and his son! The sudden cry of death drowned the song of the minstrel, and the banquet horns of the traitor overflowed with blood! Then rose the shouts of the murderous Normans to the battlements of the castle, and the vaulted roofs rang with their savage exultation over the bleeding corse of the Celtic prince! Not content with this, the tyrant surprised the palace of his murdered guest, and slew his only remaining son clasped in the arms of a shrieking mother! But the monster escaped not the just vengeance of heaven; he was compelled to fly these towers, to resign all his ill-got possessions, and wander a wretched outcast and a beggar in a foreign land, while his son perished by famine in the dungeons of Windsor.

But to return to the town. Sweetly embosomed by the three Alpine mountains of the Blorenge, the Skyrrid, and the Sugarloaf, with their neighbouring humbler hills, Abergavenny stands on a gentle rising above the river Usk, that here through a vale, luxuriant in woods, groves, and flowery pastures, spreads its translucent waves to

the laughing sun with such beauty and effect as I may not attempt to delineate. Nor must I stop to describe half the varied landscapes which this romantic country of the ancient Cymry offered to my view, on my journey from Abergavenny to Brecon. At Crickhowell, I was interested with the fragments of Alashby Castle. Of its legend I am utterly ignorant, but it was, no doubt, originally a British fortress; and as the insolent Normans penetrated into the heart of this harrassed country, became the scene of many a gallant action. There is a gothic archway here, which the gentleman to whom it belongs pointed out to me, through which the silvery windings of the Usk in long perspective have a most picturesque effect. This little town hangs on the skirts of a mountain; to the north is the Table-rock, a hill of a singular shape, at the back of which rises the stupendous summit of the Cradle-mountain; while to the east appears the cloud-capt cone of the Sugarloaf. To the south is the smiling valley of the Usk, over which a narrow ancient bridge of fourteen arches leads to the pleasant village of Langottoc; around it appear many fine seats richly embosomed in groves and woods, and beyond a range of mountains lift their heads into the southern sky; the sources of several Cambrian rivers.

After leaving Crickhowell and passing the mountain of Bwlch,—from whence with a deep sigh, I took a farewell view of the Elysian valley of the Usk, never perhaps to behold it again,—I entered on a plain of a very opposite character, in which the solitary lake of Langor spreads its sluggish and melancholy waters seven miles in circumference, surrounded with dark and dreary mountains: on its eastern shores appeared the dismal ruins of some baronial castle. At length I descended into the rich vale of Brecon, and arrived at Aberhonddu, the capital of South Wales. Brecon, like Abergavenny, crowns a gentle eminence on the banks of the Usk, surrounded with a vale charmingly diversified with woody knolls, meadows of golden flowers, lawns of eternal green, and groves of the brightest verdure enclosed with an amphitheatre of distant mountains; among which, the majestic Van rears its divided summit like another Parnassus, overlooking the sweetly sylvan and truly poetic valleys of Cambria.

On the banks of the Hondy, which here mingles its headlong stream with the waters of the Usk, stand the poor remains of Aberhonddu's once stately castle. It is said to have been founded by Bernard de Newmarch, another of the marauding and blood-thirsty Normans; who, in

the reign of William Rufus, made an incursion with a numerous band of vassals and retainers into these happy valleys, and murdering the British chief of these domains, retained his son a pining captive within those towers to the day of his death. In the lapse of ages, this castle became the occasional residence of Buckingham, the base tool of Richard III. In those days what a display of baronial pomp and chivalry was seen within these walls; what splendid dissipation, what riotous festivity, what carousals, what gambols, what gorgeous tilts and tourneys have been witnessed here at the celebration of the Christian anniversaries. At yule-tide what sacred mysteries, maumeries with miracles, and legendary histories of noble families have been performed in the halls of this castle of chivalry by the monks of the neighbouring priory of St. John, arrayed in the splendid vestments of the altar, or flowing tabards emblazoned with armorial devices of splendid colours. Then brightly blazed the great yule-log of oak; while from the echoing roof hung the magic mistletoe, the last relic of druidism. Then the wandering minstrels, the jesters, and the mummers entertained the henchmen, the menials, and vassals with their music, wit, buffoonery, and pleas-

ant romances, till the lofty hall shook with the din of merriment. But other scenes have been performed here: to that tower was committed a prisoner, Morton, Bishop of Ely; and hither retired the disappointed and ambitious Buckingham from the court of Richard; who, no longer needing his bloody services, grew weary of his repeated importunities. In the chamber of that tower, almost the only relic of the castle's former grandeur, the proud duke with the mitred Morton complotted the downfal of Richard. Yes, within these walls were laid the plans of that grand conspiracy, which had for its object the tearing the imperial diadem from the usurper's brows, and placing it on those of the white rose of England, —a prince of the ancient line of Cadwallader.

What preparations were here then made; what a gathering of vassals; what an assembling of warriors; what scouring of armour! Then what waving of golden banners, what ringing of trumpets and shout of soldiers, as the rebel duke mounted his war-caparisoned steed and led from these gates, to which he was never again to return, his Cambrian army towards the banks of the Severn. Grandeur, behold thy doom, and turn heart-sickened at the transient glories of this false world! A few naked, rugged, crumbling walls

are all that remain of the palace of ambitious Buckingham! And he,—where is he?——The melancholy voice of stormy winds, and the midnight hootings of the owl, are now the only music heard in the once gorgeous wine-chambers of Aberhonddu's princely pile.

But I must be brief. From Brecon I proceeded to Llandovery, on a delightful road, through mountain passes and the most romantic valleys. From Llandovery my rout continued to Lampeter, a poor uninteresting place, and thence to a village called Landewi-Brevi; where I slept in a wretched cottage on a bed of straw, and supped on a black mess of soup composed of beans and various other vegetables boiled together with a little fat, and stale cakes of bannock. But I have always found great kindness from the Welch peasantry, even when they could not speak one word of English. I was anxious to visit Landewi, having read that in the church of this poor deserted village a synod of bishops was held in 522, in which St. David warmly opposed the errors of the Pelagians. But it could not have been the church which is now standing. I however saw a huge petrified horn, which is said to have remained in it ever since that period; and

over the window of the north side of the chancel is the following inscription:—

HIC JACET IDNERT FILIUS
QUI OCCISUS FUIT PROPTERP SANCTI.

Here lies Ednerth, put to death for violating this Sanctuary.

I find a college was also erected here, 1187, by one Bishop Beck; but the very foundations are vanished. Directed by a native peasant, I visited the neighbouring site of an ancient city called Caer Kestish, where a number of Roman antiquities have at various times been discovered. This is the place which Mr. Horsley and Dr. Gibson assert to have been the Lovantinum of Ptolemy. It was evening when I reached the spot. All was stillness around me: not a sound or vestige of a human being could be heard or seen. I sat down on the fragment of a stone, which had once been hewn by the hands of the mighty Romans. A most painful sensation oppressed my heart: for here were no dilapidated walls, no crumbling towers, no ruined amphitheatres, not even the foundation of a temple remaining,—not one stone left on another! Yet here once flourished a Roman city!

From Landewi I proceeded towards Tregaron, an insignificant town, and thence to Pont ar Fynach, or the Devil's bridge, over a wild and dreary country; but some of its heights afforded a view of the mighty Plinlimmon, with a long range of mountains in North Wales, and the fine bay of Cardigan. At the Devil's bridge I had the curiosity, though not without danger, to descend the woody precipices and view the falls of the Mynach, whose deep-mouthed thunder I heard at a considerable distance. The Pont ar Fynach is, in fact two bridges, one above the other, each forming a single arch thrown across a narrow, but dark and tremendously deep chasm of rocks piled on rocks, which form a fine contrast to the waving green wood that half enshrouds them. At a fearful depth below is heard the continual din of the mountain torrent; and as you approach the low parapet to look over, you involuntarily recoil at the first sight of its foaming waters writhing with ceaseless rage amid its rocky labyrinth, and roaring like a wounded lion, as though it would undermine and hurl its eternal barriers into the abyss. The lower bridge, of which the Devil is said to have been the wonderful architect, was built by the monks of Strata Florida abbey, about seven hundred years ago.

The trifling ruins of this monastery, once the venerable archives of the ancient British chronicles, and the last resting place of a long line of the Welch princes, I am informed are still to be seen, at some distance from hence, amid the woody recesses of mountainous wilds; but not one memorial of their warlike greatness or public virtues remains to tell the pilgrim where sleeps the dust of the Cymryan kings. I now descended, by the help of the twigs and roots of trees, to the bottom of the gulph profound, when a sublimely savage and awful scene appeared. More than a hundred feet above my head, betwixt hanging woods and ornamented with elegant festoons of ivy, appeared the two arches of the bridges bestriding the hideous chasm; at my feet, with the voice of a thousand thunders roared the maddened river, rushing, whirling, boiling, and tumbling amid its caverns of eternal gloom. A soft white cloud of spray, as if it enshrined the awful genius of the mountain flood, hovered above the dark waters, and threw a pale kind of rainbow arch across the wave-worn crags and wood-crowned hollows of this terrific abyss, forming a picture of such savage grandeur as the boldest Italian pencil has never yet equalled! Quitting this gulph, I ventured to descend on the other side of

the bridge as low as I possibly could to the channel of the river. Here an unimagined scene of Nature's magnificence burst upon me. Here the awful cataract, whose perpendicular height is more than two hundred and ten feet, appeared in all its astounding and overwhelming sublimity. Here from its rock-piled barriers, dark as the slowly passing thunder-cloud, the Mynach precipitated its angry waters in four grand cascades of twenty feet in descent, the centre fall having a most picturesque and superior magnitude. These sheets of liquid diamond, formed a second fall of more than sixty feet, and a third of nineteen feet; then reposing for a moment from its toil, the whole congregated mass of waters rolled in one tremendous and appalling volume over a craggy ledge one hundred and twelve feet in height! The upper streams formed so many beautiful flying buttresses of the purest silver, to a stupendous pile of rugged and gigantic rocks of the most sombre hue. Impervious woods thicken around this profound abode of eternal thunder, and the guardian goddess of the Mynach seems here again to rise from her infuriate waves, veiled in her misty robe white and fleecy as the morning cloud; while the echoes of the cataract's deafening roar are

rebounded from rock to rock, till they expire amid the solitary depths of the distant forests!

Twelve miles from hence I arrived at Aberystwith, the end of my present journey. Thus, through the kindness of Providence, have I safely travelled on foot from sea to sea, through the centre of South Wales, in a few days;—a journey, the lonely wearisomeness of which has been more than repayed by the interesting places of antiquity which I have visited, and the variety and beauty of the prospects that met my view, at almost every turn. As I passed up the street of Aberystwith, I heard some person calling after me by my legitimate cognomen. A voice from heaven could for the moment have scarcely more surprised me. It must be some mistake, thought I; my ears have deceived me; for who should possibly know me in this remote corner of the world. I turned about, and to my astonishment beheld a person, nearly allied to a branch of my own family, approaching me, who formerly resided in the neighbourhood of L——. This young man, I found, now lives in the vicinity of Aberystwith. But I must conclude, and with my best wishes for your prosperity,

I remain, Yours, &c.

SYLVATICUS.

LETTER LXIX.

Aberystwith.

DEAR FRANK,

I FOUND as I expected a company of performers here, and the town nearly full of visitors. The manager was absent on my arrival, but his actors seem to be very different beings to those wretches whom I left at Chepstow; for having felt very unwell after my arrival, owing principally to the fatigue of walking so much in the heat of summer, I found some of them very attentive and kind to me.

Here are the shattered remains of a magnificent castle, built on the site of a palace of the great Cadwallader. Strongbow was the original founder of this castle, which being demolished by Gwineth, prince of North Wales, was re-edified by Edward I. in 1277. In the next century Glendowr possessed it, till it was taken by Henry IV. You see I am still on classic ground. The view from these ruins, the hill on which they stand forming the grand promenade, is very noble,—extending from the promontory of Caer-

narvon and the island of Bardsey on the right, to the coast of Pembroke on the left: to the west the fine bay of Cardigan stretches forward till it meets the horizon, enlivened with numerous vessels gliding across in every direction the billowy expanse; while northward beyond the estuary of Dovey, an enormous line of gigantic mountains, with the loftier Cader Idris overtopping them in proud majesty, lift their mighty summits into the clouds.

I have been to visit Plas Grug, once the strong palace of Owen Glendowr, which stands about half a mile from this town. Its ruins principally consist of a wall, enclosing a square area, and a strong and lofty square tower. This, doubtless, is of British construction, and has been the residence of several Welch princes. The fortresses of the ancient British chiefs, generally consisted of a strong embattled tower. Here dwelt the "great Magician," the redoubted Glendowr, who says that at his birth,

"The front of heaven was full of fiery shapes;
The goats ran from the mountains, and the herds
Were strangely clamorous to the frighted fields.
These signs have marked me extraordinary,
And all the courses of my life do show
I am not in the roll of common men.

Where is he living,—clipped in with the sea
That chides the banks of England, Scotland, Wales,—
Which calls me pupil, or hath read to me?
And bring him out, that is but woman's son,
Can trace me in the tedious ways of art,
And hold me pace in deep experiments."

Here on these shores he called his "spirits from the vasty deep:" but we may doubt with Hotspur whether they would come when he did call them. Here the three arch-rebels, Glendowr, Hotspur, and Mortimer, apportioned to themselves and divided on their maps the fair provinces of England and Wales.

"Into three limits" [says Mortimer] "very equally:
England, from Trent and Severn hitherto
By south and east, is to my part assigned:
All westward, Wales beyond the Severn shore,
And all the fertile land within that bound,
To Owen Glendowr: and, dear coz, to you
The remnant northward lying off from Trent."

Here the lovely Cambrian princess, the daughter of Glendowr, whose tongue

"Made Welch as sweet as ditties highly penned,"

took leave of her beloved Saxon, the noble Mortimer of kingly line, the rightful heir to the

British throne, who had been brought a captive by her father to these towers, smarting beneath

"Those wounds,
Those mouthed wounds, which valiantly he took
When on the gentle Severn's sedgy bank,
In single opposition, hand to hand,
He did confound the best part of an hour
In changing hardiment with great Glendowr.
Three times they breathed, and three times did they drink
Upon agreement, of swift Severn's flood;
Who then affrighted with their bloody looks
Ran fearfully among the trembling reeds,
And hid his crisp head in the hollow bank
Blood-stained with these valiant combatants."

As I stood musing in the twilight on these scenes of other days amid the ruins, the soft sweet winds of evening came coolly from the ocean; and as they sighed around the rugged battlements of the unfrequented tower, methought Glendowr's minstrel spirits hovered above me, and filled the air with the wild melody of their invisible harps.——'Tis vanished into nothingness; all that has been, and all that now appears, shall pass away as the shadow of a cloud! Yes, the rough and lordly warriors, and the soft beauties of that hour of parting and tears, of conspiracy

and preparatory war, have faded for ever from the world, like the unearthly music that filled so sweetly the chambers of this regal tower!

On the return of the manager to Aberystwith, I appeared on the stage in the part of Osmond, in *The Castle Spectre*, and was favourably received by the audience. The manager, Dunn, immediately engaged me, and put into my hands a week's salary in advance. But the overbearing insolence and vulgarity he displayed, prepossessed me but little towards him. On the second night of my performance, he shone forth in his true character; for as I was conversing with one of the actors respecting the part I should have to perform with him on the succeeding play-night, Dunn rudely interrupted me, and with an oath and a ridiculous swagger authoritatively declared, that he would never allow a performer in any theatre of his to dictate or arrange how the scenes in a play should be acted. Sickened by such an unprovoked and insolent attack, and unable to submit to such intolerable government, I threw down the paltry sum I had received from him, and quitted the play-house, resolved never again to set my foot in a theatre belonging to such an ignorant despot.

Thus, my dear friend, after taking so long a

journey, I am again adrift on the wide ocean of life. I have written to London, from which I am now distant more than two hundred miles, to desire the keeper of the theatrical register-office to procure me a situation without delay. I shall set off on foot for the metropolis to-morrow morning, in as direct a line as I can, hoping to meet with a vacancy in some company by the way. But under all my trials and disappointments,

I remain,

Yours most sincerely,

SYLVATICUS.

LETTER LXX.

Cheltenham.

MY KIND FRIEND,

AFTER quitting Aberystwith, I again crossed the Devil's bridge; and having heard that a company was at Ludlow, in Shropshire, directed my route through the centre of Radnorshire for the town of Knighton. O, what a wild, barren, mountainous, moorland country did I wander through! The roads, if roads they may be called, must surely be impassable in the winter; wild heaths and desolate forests, with not a hut to be seen for many miles, extended on every side; and not a peasant that I chanced to meet could speak a word of English! I however reached Rayader-gowy, a small town in Radnor, on my first day's march,—about thirty-two miles. On the second day I lost my way, and wandered among the frightful wilds and mountains of this dreary county. On almost every lofty hill appeared the camps of the ancient Britons. Here, environed by the everlasting fortresses of nature, they made their last stand for dear-prized liberty

against the subduing Romans; and I could not but consider this dreary region, though lonely as the savage forests of America, sacred ground; for here it was that the immortal champion of British liberty, the great Caractacus, wandered with his harrassed troops of hardy veterans, till overcome by Ostorius, he was compelled to fly for refuge to those who basely betrayed him into the hands of his too powerful enemies.*

At length after the most wearisome wanderings, continuing to direct my march eastward, I approached at set of sun towards the confines of Shropshire. I had been compelled to ford two rivers during the day, in one of which I floundered into a hollow nearly up to my shoulders; and almost sinking with fatigue, I came to a miserable village, where I learnt there was an inn about a mile further on the road. This place of public accommodation I reached at dusk, and found it to be a poor miserable hovel, with only one common room to receive guests, whose visits, from the appearance of the house and lack of company during the whole of my stay there, must, I conceive, be like those of angels'—"few and far

* The Editor of Camden in his additions, considers that the true Caer Caradoc, or principal fortress of Caractacus, was in Shropshire, two miles south of Clun and three from Coxal.

between." The hostess was a tall raw-boned woman, coarse in her manners and squallid in her appearance, with three or four squalling dirty urchins about her. She however told me I could have a bed, made up a large peat fire to dry my clothes, and after a time cooked some eggs and bacon for my supper. I had about me betwixt seven and eight pounds in silver, the remainder of the profits of my benefit at Chepstow. I had it in silver on account of the difficulty often met with, of getting distant country bank notes changed. But I found the sum weighty and cumbersome; and thought of the danger of being robbed and thrown pennyless on the world. I therefore rashly resolved to pack the money up in something, and send it to the White Horse Cellar in London, as soon as I arrived at Ludlow, should I not obtain a situation with the company there. I looked about me at this miserable ale-house, and saw on a shelf a small tin caddy which I purchased of the landlady for eighteen-pence. Reserving to myself a sum necessary for my direct journey to the metropolis, I deposited in it the contents of my pocket. The sound attracted the woman's notice and she exclaimed, "Ay, ay, I know now what you want my caddy for: you have been about the country buying up all the

guineas you can find. Why you've got your pockets full of them, and are going to send them off to Lunnun, I suppose. Yes, yes, you must make a fine penny that way, I dare say." It was in vain that I repeatedly assured her it was not guineas which I had packed up; she continued firm in her belief that I was nothing less than a guinea-merchant. I now obtained of her some paper, in which I enclosed the caddy, and sealing it, put it into her hands,—foolish enough, you will say,—to keep for me till the morning. A little after dark, my host came in from his field-labour, and sitting down by the fire, took the homely supper which his wife had prepared for him. His countenance was not of the most pleasant cast, and he appeared gloomy and sulky, not deigning to drink out of my cup of miserable ale, the only beverage the house afforded, though I invited him more than once. Melancholy and fatigued, I requested at an early hour to retire to rest. The landlord sullenly complied with my desire, and taking a candle, lighted me across a sort of out-house or lumber-room to my chamber. Here a fresh scene of wretchedness presented itself. The stairs by which we ascended were rude, broken, and covered with dirt. The chamber, if such it might be called, had no door to it,

and its only furniture, was an old broken chair and a low pallet or bed stuffed with straw, and nearly as hard as a board. A large bag was hung before the window, or rather aperture, to keep out the midnight winds; and a filthy horse cloth and a blanket were the only covering to my miserable couch. Glad, almost any where, to rest my weary limbs, I took off my clothes, put out the light, and lay down on my wretched bed, consoling myself with the thought that it was but for one night, that morning would soon awake me to new and pleasanter scenes; and recommending myself to the protection of heaven, presently fell asleep.

Agitated by a strange and unaccountable sensation, somewhere about midnight, I suddenly awoke. I felt alarmed, and instinctively rose up in the bed. The danger of my situation rushed upon my mind. The woman's firm belief that the caddy was filled with gold, the dismal loneliness of the house, the poverty of its savage inhabitants, with the thought that should the woman, overcome with avarice and curiosity, once break the seal of the caddy, she could not have the face to restore it to me,—all came with full and terrible force on my newly awakened senses. While thus fearfully ruminating, without any weapon

or means of defence, I plainly heard, by the creeking of the boards, some person softly walking to and fro in the next chamber, and frequently a faint half-audible whisper fell on my eagerly listening ear. Some one now creeped softly past the staircase, and shortly after, to my unspeakable horror, I distinctly heard a person digging with a spade on the outside of the house. All the horrors of a violent death now stared me full in the face, and a cold perspiration streamed from every pore. All the frightful stories I had heard relating to strangers being murdered in lone houses, crowded on my memory; and I felt perfectly assured that the murderous landlord was at that moment forming my grave. Bidding an eternal farewell to my wife, my child, and all my friends, who without a miracle must for ever remain ignorant of my wretched end, and recommending my soul to God, I gave myself up to the terrible fate that seemed to await me.

He who has received the sentence of death, and waits for the bloody executioner, can alone tell the agony of that dismal hour. I seemed deprived of all power to rise or attempt my escape; and involved in utter darkness, I kept looking towards the open entrance to my chamber, in momentary expectation of my murderers. Often did I seem

to hear, after the digging had ceased, the footstep of some one stealing up the broken stairs; till by turns my blood flowed as cold as ice, and then hurried to my palpitating heart with the heat of a thousand fevers. At length I attempted to dress myself; but falling over the broken chair by the side of my bed, and tumbling the candlestick on the floor, such was my confusion and trepidation, that I could not find half my clothes. Continued whisperings again assailed me, and I heard a sound like something heavy falling on the ground in the lumber-room below me. I heard no footstep in my chamber, nor felt any one seize hold of me as I every moment expected. I then sat down on the side of my bed, for I considered all attempt to escape as utterly useless.

How long I remained in this state, I cannot tell; every thing however became perfectly still, and I felt more composed. At length, to my unspeakable joy, I saw the first gleams of morning steal through the holes in the bag hung before the window; I jumped forward, tore it down, and O, how I blest the coming dawn! I then presently dressed myself, and sitting down on the bed, fell into a sort of troubled slumber: when I awoke it was broad daylight. I soon descended from my chamber of horrors, and found my host up, sitting

in a chair, and seemingly in much pain. I inquired if he had not been up the greater part of the night. With some hesitation he answered in the affirmative, stating that he had been suddenly seized a little after midnight with such spasms in his legs, as rendered him unable to walk across the house without the help of a stick. Demanding my caddy, I gladly received it with the seal unbroken, and instantly quitted the house. There was something so very mysterious in this business, that I am convinced some foul play was intended; and that the interposition of an ever-watchful Providence alone preserved my life. It seems to me, either that this man was seized with what he called "a terrible pain in his legs," which deprived him of their use; or, finding that I was awake from the noise which I made when attempting to put on my clothes, he became, like Macbeth, "infirm of purpose," and could not afterwards screw his "courage to the sticking place," and therefore abandoned the bloody purpose he had designed.

On arriving at Ludlow, I found a company, but no room for an additional actor; and was once more obliged to continue my journey towards London. I could not, however, quit that place without viewing its interesting castle,—a most

magnificent ruin. From its ancient Celtic name, Dinan Llys Tywsog, or the Palace of the Prince, I have no doubt but it was originally the residence of some of the princes of Pengwern, or Powysland. Here was the seat of the viceroys of Wales, and sometimes of the heirs to the English throne. It stands on the rocky termination of a lofty hill, overlooking the confluence of the Teme and the Corve, and surrounded with a wall and strong towers, even yet in tolerable repair. On passing the outer gate, which opens from the castle into the town, you enter the court-yard or outer ballium, which is very large and contains the hall of justice, place of records, and many other buildings left to moulder in decay. Here the castle garrison took up their abode, during the occupation of this once-important fortress. In the north-west corner of this area, the hoary towers of the palace still lift their sublime battlements in solitary grandeur, commanding an extensive prospect and surrounded by a second immensely deep fosse hewn out of the living rock and vast ramparts, above which the ash and sturdy oak spread their leafy branches, embowering the thrush that sweetly tunes his evening song over the mouldering wreck of greatness. Passing the inner gates, above which are the

arms of the Sidney family and beneath them an inscription, I entered this grand palace of princes. Alas! what a melancholy mass of imposing ruins surrounded me! In the middle of this second court-yard was a fountain; on one side stands the grand chapel, the end of which is circular; and fronting the entrance are the remains of the splendid hall. But its numerous coats of arms, with the lances, spears, firelocks, and old armour which Dr. Stukeley records as having seen at the beginning of the last century, are all swept away; and nothing but rubbish, and the square ponderous towers and thick-ribbed walls, lifting in naked cheerlessness their ragged summits to the clouds, are now to be seen.

Around these mural ramparts, how often has the blood-swollen tide of battle rolled; and the midnight trumpet of the beleaguering foe aroused the sleepy warders. Around these walls galloped on his warhorse the mail-clad Stephen, when he bravely rescued from the soldiers of the Empress the princely Henry of Scotland, as with a grappling iron they tore him from his horse, and he hung suspended betwixt heaven and earth. Here assembled his host of the Marches the ambitious Richard of York, when he openly asserted his right to the crown: and here dwelt his innocent

grandson Edward VI. Here with pomp and glorious circumstance of royalty was the youthful prince first proclaimed England's monarch. Ah, fatal were those trumpet tones that then rung round the palace walls; fatal the strains of the minstrel harp, that echoed in that festal hour through this hall. They rang his early knell: from this gate did he depart in pomp and triumph to mount a throne; but he stepped into an untimely grave, which the blood-died hand of an uncle had already prepared for him. What days of splendid chivalry have here been seen, when prince Arthur, with his consort Catharine of Arragon, held here their court! What an assemblage of English and Spanish beauties then graced these gorgeous halls; what valiant knights of love and honour thronged their portals! What fond whisperings, what tender sighs of bright-eyed damsels have been breathed within these palace walls! What a rich and voluptuous mingling has there been here of the mellifluous notes of Celtic harp and Spanish guitar, touched by the snow-white fingers of Iberian maids to tales of chivalrous romance and love! Pomp, pride, valour, beauty, whither are ye all fled? My heart pains and sickens at the reflection!

But there are two circumstances which will

eternally consecrate thy memory, when every stone of thy superb fabric, thou palace of Ludlow, shall be crumbled to dust: for here it was that the incomparable masque of *Comus* was first represented, in 1634. Yes, in this magnificent hall of princes, by the beautiful Alice, daughter of the Earl of Bridgwater, president of Wales, were these beautiful lines warbled forth:

"Sweet echo, sweetest nymph that liv'st unseen
Within thy airy shell,
By slow Meander's margin green,
And in the violet-embroidered vale,
Where the love-lorn nightingale
Nightly to thee her sad song mourneth well."

Ah, never again shall these walls return the echoes of such sweet sounds!

It seems, my friend, that Milton founded his story on a real incident. The two sons of the Earl and Lady Alice, on their way from a family residence in Herefordshire to the castle of Ludlow, were benighted in the forest of Haywood; and the lady for a time lost. Lawes, the friend of Milton, who taught music in the family, requested Milton to write the masque, which he set to music, and acted the character of the attendant spirit; while the lady sustained the part which she had previ-

ously performed in real life. Here, too, it was that Butler, secretary to the Earl of Carbery, wrote his poem of *Hudibras*.——What more need be said to render this pile one of the most interesting, as it was once one of the most magnificent in Europe!

Cheltenham is a fine gay place; but it contains little to interest me. I received at this post-office a letter from the agent in town, who informs me he has a good situation for me in Jonas and Penley's company at Peckham, where I now hasten my weary steps.

I am,

With every sincere wish for your happiness,

SYLVATICUS.

LETTER LXXI.

East Bourne.

DEAR FRANK,

ON reaching Peckham, I found that the manager had announced my first appearance in the bills for a preceding night; not arriving in time, I lost my engagement, and was compelled to come hither, a distance of sixty-five miles, to join another division of the company, under the management of Jonas. Mrs. Mac Gibbon of Covent-Garden and her lisping, ignorantly imperious husband are two of our performers, as is also a Miss Cooke of Drury-Lane, a very handsome girl. Mrs. Mac Gibbon is certainly a woman of talent and considerable mind; yet there is a meanness of expression about her countenance, and a want of majesty in her figure, which detracts greatly from that effect her acting would otherwise produce. The night on which I opened here in the Duke of Gloucester, she played Jane Shore with great feeling and correctness: her dying scene was finer than any thing of the kind I have ever seen. Her husband, notwithstanding he some time since

gruffly lisped through Macduff at Covent-Garden, is wholly destitute of any real dramatic genius, and can never be an actor. Brunton of Covent-Garden is also playing here for five or six nights. I see nothing in his performances to admire; nothing worthy imitation. A proud consciousness of self-importance and a superiority of stage finesse, joined to a natural ease, the effect of habit, and a constitutional sprightliness, which throws a sort of pleasing halo round his otherwise commonplace style of acting, seems to buoy him up from sinking into the level of his provincial brethren who act with him. I play most of the second characters to him, and have now much professional study.

I left my letter unfinished three weeks ago, and have now to inform you that this theatre is about to be closed, and the company discharged. Thus after toiling through the fatigue of so immense a journey, in another fortnight I shall be again destitute of a situation, without being allowed even the chance of a benefit. O, my friend, I am truly sickened, disgusted with this profession and its followers. The humblest hut and the coarsest fare, how enviable, how preferable to

this life of uncertainty, and perpetual change. What a distance is this from my home! But I am resolved to return by the nearest route along the coast once more to that sequestered cottage which contains my wife and child. I now feel that I would rather shut myself up with them in the deepest obscurity, would even rather we should all perish together by deliberate starvation, and complete that sad tragedy which poor Boissy the French poet was prevented by the timely aid of a friend from accomplishing, than follow any longer the profession in which I am now engaged. What have I found among this people, into whose society my fate has so long thrown me, and whom in my early romantic imaginings I could not help regarding as a class of superior beings! Why from the highest to the lowest, save and excepting some few individuals, nothing but the basest tyranny, falsehood, envy, and all deceivableness of unrighteousness. And does all the world conspire to crush me, and strive to check my progress towards an honest fame? Is there no honour, no truth, no kindness any where to be found? Does the fear of rivalry destroy all the good and amiable feelings of the heart in every liberal profession? O no:—I have erred, and mistaken the road to true renown. I should have followed the

path of the Muses, and long ere this the noble host of literary characters, the light and glory of my country, would have stretched forth the hand of fellowship, and kindly assisted me in my arduous and uphill journey. Then would those fostering smiles, so liberally bestowed on other sons of genius, risen from obscurity deep as my own, have been my cheering reward and crown of rejoicing in the day of triumph. Adieu for ever to the theatre! Shadow of fictitious splendour, "unreal mockery" of pomp, farewell! In a few days I shall turn my back on its portals, never again to enter it as a votary of Thespis. Welcome, rather, the labours of the field, the unremitting toil of the cottage peasant!

Like the repentant prodigal, I will return to my deserted home. I will sit down and devote my whole time to the production of a poem of length, on some interesting story. I feel an assurance hourly strengthening in my bosom, that He, who has so long been my guide, my preserver, will some way or other in the mysterious dispensations of his eternal providence, find out the means for our sustentation till my work is completed. One patron is yet spared to me,—the Rev. J. R——. To him will I go, confess that I have erred and strayed like a lost sheep,

and assure him of my resolution never again to return to the stage. He will, he must forgive my imprudent aberrations, and promote and foster my laudable undertaking.

The next time, Frank, you hear of me, it will be from the little cottage in the valley of woods, far from the world, its empty pleasures, its unsatisfactory vanities. Home! what magic in the sound! what joyful anticipations fill my throbbing heart! Accept the enclosed spontaneous tribute of my muse, and believe me

Ever sincerely yours,

SYLVATICUS.

HOME.

Home! In that little word what magic dwells!
Who hath not felt its influence? When his eye,
Far on the moon-light surge, the seaboy lifts
To the bright queen of heaven, his heart-heaved sigh
Blends with the passing night-breeze; and the thought
That yonder blessed light shines sweetly round
His distant cottage-home comes o'er his mind,
Awakening fond remembrances of those
His soul loves dearest. He who o'er the waste
Of wild Zahara, faint with burning thirst,
Wanders at shut of eve, no fountain near,
As on the sands he lays him down to die,

Thinks of his home with agonizing tears,
And breathes with his last sigh a prayer for those
Whom he has left behind. The captive, who
In dungeons of eternal darkness chained
His bitter days hath worn away in wo,
When on his couch of straw kind slumbers close
His tear-washed eye, still in his happy dreams
Beholds again his home, and in the arms
Of its loved inmates feels returning joy;
Till his worn frame no longer can endure
Th' excess of fancied bliss, that soon awakes
Him to the due reality of grief.
E'en the proud conqueror in the battle-day,
As round him swell the shouts of his glad host,
Thinks of the joy that in his bannered halls
Await him, when triumphant he returns
In laurelled car to his ancestral home.

Evening is in the valley; all is still
Save the sweet blackbird's parting hymn to day,
And the deep vespers of the torrent gush
Flashing from far amid the woodland glade.
The exiled Swiss is on that torrent's marge
Watching the glories of the western sky,
Where some angelic limner seems to paint
Bright scenes of paradise, with pencil dipt
In tints that mark the sunbow. And there floats
Adown that valley, on the listless breeze,
Soft stranger music from some minstrel's reed:
O, 'tis the music of his native land
That falls upon th' enraptured exile's ear

Paining his soul with ecstasy. Ask then
If in that hour his distant home be dear?

Take from his fields of ice and hut of snow
The pallid dweller of the arctic climes,
And place him in some sunny island where
Eternal summer reigns, where hill and dale
With blossoms are empurpled, and the air
Is rich with th' odours of its spicy woods;
Yet in its vine-bowers, hung with luscious fruit,
Mango and fig-tree groves, and orange shades,
He for his ice-cave and his deer-skin couch,
Embosomed in the whirlwind of the north,
That rushes o'er the inhospitable waste
And deserts of interminable snow,
Mocking the dismal howl of savage bears,
Would deeply sigh, a wanderer from his home!

I, too, have been an exile far from home!
Far have I wandered from my native vale
O'er land and stormy sea, in quest of friends,
Honour, and fame: and now from the pursuit
Heart-sickened, I to thee for comfort turn,
Dear home! To thy sweet forest shades I fly
From Envy, Disappointment, and the frowns
Of petty Tyranny. When far away
Amid the festive scenes of gay resort,
Or in the hours of midnight solitude
When sorrow and mishap flung on my heart
Their load of wretchedness, still, still to thee
My gay or saddened thoughts would veer, and bear

Me to the dear-loved quiet of thy hearth.
O, how I long to view thee once again;
To lay my weary head beneath thy roof
In peace upon that pillow, which the hand
Of love shall for me smooth: there fondly kiss
The damask rose that blooms on the soft cheek
Of my sweet slumbering boy, and mark the moon
Stealing betwixt the foliage of the groves
My hermitage embowering, her pale ray
To fling within my casement, and my couch
With silvery beauty shower. Sweet there to rest,
And think on the fierce turmoil of the world
Far off, with all its baseness, guilt, and pride,
And all the dangers and the toils I've past.
Like him who, safe on some sea headland's height
After long voyage, views the storm descend,
The ocean, pale with wrath, arise, and strew
His sounding shores with wrecks! Sweet there to rest,
While Dian's minstrels of the forest-bowers
Sing me to sleep with their melodious hymns!"

LETTER LXXII.

L—— Cottage.

My kind Friend,

On the last Sunday in September, I turned my back on East Bourne; and badè, I humbly hope in God, an eternal farewell to the theatre. I had a long walk over the downs, and on my arrival in Brighton, passing through one of the streets, I heard a voice calling on my name. On turning round, I perceived my former acquaintance at Wansford, Mr. Beverly, who warmly invited me to his lodgings. I readily complied with his request, and found that he had relinquished the stage, and followed solely the profession of an itinerant miniature-painter; I was really much astonished, when he showed me some of his specimens, at the very great talent which he displayed as a self-taught artist. Nor was Mrs. Beverly, it seems, idle. In every town which they visited, I was led to understand she gave a night's grand entertainment, consisting of songs, recitations, comic and tragic, and readings from Milton. Mercy on me! thought I, what pre-

sumption! "Yes," said Mrs. Beverly, "you are just come in time. I am going to give a theatrical Olio to-morrow night, in the grand rooms at the Old Ship Tavern. I have already sold thirty-two pounds worth of tickets among some of the first families here, and shall to-morrow sell a great many more." Here she took snuff from her reticule in profusion, and launched out into a flourishing eulogium on her own abilities; talked of the large sums she and her husband had made by their individual talents, since they had given up the theatre; what patronage she obtained from the principal inhabitants of Chichester, and what compliments his lordship the Bishop of that city, who honoured her performance with his presence, paid to her Miltonic readings! I could scarcely believe my own ears. Surely, said I to myself, this woman must have hid her wonderful talents under a bushel all the time that I have known her, disdaining to shine forth in a barn; for both her singing and speaking have generally seemed to me below mediocrity, whenever I had the honour of hearing her. Beverly very kindly pressed me to stay with them till after Monday night, and I willingly complied. The evening came, and I was all eager curiosity to see how Mrs. Beverly would

acquit herself, and give a mono-theatrical entertainment to a first-rate audience at Brighton.

I found the rooms at the Old Ship Tavern of stately dimensions, and superbly lighted up for the occasion. Mrs. B. had chosen the inner saloon for the scene of her performance, and at the upper end was a handsome screen placed, behind which she retired at every change of character. A full military band attended by the command of their officers, and played most delightfully. Carriages began to arrive, and the company, who appeared principally of the *bon ton*, continued to flock in till the room was nearly full. The music ceased. I was all anxiety. Mrs. B. came from behind the screen, better dressed than I had ever seen her. She began a recitation:—loud whispering on every side. I trembled for her! Applause:—that's cheering: I trust she'll do better in her next speech. Then came a song. "*Chevrotter et far una tosse di capra*," said an Italian lady sitting just before me. Yes, thought I, her shake has too much of the goat's cough about it indeed. She does not keep to the time; the master of the band who accompanies her, I see, is in agonies. However, the audience were very good-natured. She has got through it somehow, without being

hissed. A comic address which followed, was spoken very fairly, and won thunders of applause. Next, Collins's *Ode on the Passions*:—*Fear*, personified with considerable effect; *Anger*, bordering on the burlesque; *Despair*, dismally enough; *Hope*, very sweetly, and with many redeeming points; *Melancholy*, too drawling; *Cheerfulness*, very pleasingly; and *Joy*, with a happy characteristic sprightliness. On the whole, the recitation of this beautiful Ode was by far the best of her performances; and the style in which she gave a display of several of the varied passions, did considerable credit to her judgment and abilities. Other songs succeeded, and she again repeatedly got into *altissimo*, from which she fluttered down with discordant screamings, like a wounded bird from its airy flight.

Then came the Miltonic readings: but, alas! with so much previous exertion, Mrs. B's voice began to be crazed and worn into hoarseness, and thus rendered totally unfit for such an office. The deeply tuneful tones of Mrs. Siddons can alone give full effect to the sublimely awful speeches of Satan and his peers, in the gold-emblazoned palace of the infernal regions. In fact, Mrs. Beverly had neither commanding figure nor powers of execution sufficient to produce any

other sensation on her hearers, than that of indifference or pity. In short, I cannot but think, that though her fashionable audience were so polite as to cheer her with loud and numerous tokens of their approbation, yet from the

> "Quips, and cranks, and wanton wiles,
> Nods, and becks, and wreathed smiles,"

which were to be seen and heard on every side, that Mrs. B. gave as little satisfaction that evening as did the Signora La Maccherini, (whose countrymen had exaggerated and falsely represented her abilities,) the first night of her appearance at the Opera. After the departure of the company, Beverly regaled myself and two or three of his friends with some of the best wines the Old Ship could produce from her lockers, and the *Brighton Herald* the next day spoke in very flattering terms of Mrs. B's dramatic talents, and the great satisfaction her songs and readings had given the visitors of Brighton.

I soon after bid adieu to Mr. and Mrs. Beverly, and setting forward on my journey, I reached my home in safety. It was at the set of sun that I once more caught the first glimpse of my native valley. O, how many long and weary miles, I mentally exclaimed, have I travelled

since last I saw that sweet secluded spot! Happy valley of my home! there no proud, petty, ignorant tyrant reigns! Now do I feel how dearly I love thee, and despise that world,—to me a howling wilderness,—with which I once so ardently longed to become acquainted! O, may I never be cruelly driven from thee again!——Ah, I behold my embowered cottage: a smoke curls upwards from its chimney on the evening breeze; it waves like a graceful banner of love, to welcome me a weary way-worn pilgrim to my blessed home. What pleasure will soon be mine!

I was at the cottage gate; I passed through the little shrubbery; I knocked at the door: mournful faces alone met my view, and I had to learn of the recent death of the aunt of Maria, and that my little boy was suffering from the effects of an accident, by which he had been severely burnt.

I am, yours,

SYLVATICUS.

LETTER LXXIII.

L—— Cottage.

DEAR FRANK,

YOU are anxious to know what I am writing of. I will tell you in three important words,—AN EPIC POEM. "An Epic Poem!" I hear you exclaim. Yes, an Epic poem; and Milton, the chief favourite of all my favourite poets, is my great model. How valuable are now to me my studies and readings, and the notes which I made during my wanderings; for I am without patronage, without friends, without books, without access to any library, and almost without money! Yet while I have such examples before me, of merit and industry rising from the depths of obscurity to renown, as Adrian IV., the Emperor Basil, Cardinal Ximenes, Adrian VI., Franklin, Akenside, Bloomfield, Burns, Cervantes, De Foe, Virgil, Tamerlane, Watts, Matthew Prior, Allan Ramsay, Franklin, Gifford, Hume, Churchill, Samonozof the Russian Pindar, and numerous others, forming a galaxy of literary and heroic glory, I will never despair. I have obtained

nearly a hundred subscribers, though not without difficulty, and some unpleasant rebuffs. One gentleman, the Hon. ——, to whom I applied, was greatly surprised at the presumptuousness of calling the effusions of my muse, by the sublime and high-sounding title of epic. "Do you know," said he, with an air of arrogant condescension, "that only four or five epic poems have ever been attempted, through all the ages of the world; and that only three of those can be said to deserve that name? How can you, then, possibly dream of attempting such an impossible achievement?" I could have told him that there had been more than fifty epic poems attempted since the days of Homer; that the Greeks were not without their imitators of the great orginal, though they and their works are almost unknown, except Tryphiodorus the Lipogrammatist, who has obtained some poor fame by dropping the letter A. out of the first book of his Odyssey, and the same with the rest of the alphabet through the twenty-four cantos of his whimsical work. I could have mentioned the names of Bavius, Ennius, Varius Pedo, Albinovanus, Silius, Statius, Lucan, Vairess Flaccus, the last of the Roman epic writers, and Sedulius, who about the year 480, in the reign of Theodosius and Valen-

tinian, wrote an heroic poem on the life of Christ, called *the Paschal:* and even amid the darkness of uncivilized society and gothic barbarity was written the poem of *Beowulf* by some Saxon Scald, which is called by Sharon Turner "the oldest poem in an epic form that now exists in any of the vernacular languages of modern Europe. To these might be added the classic strains of Joseph of Exeter, styled the learned miracle of his age, who wrote three epic poems; not to mention several modern authors among the different European nations, all of whose poems strictly belong to the heroic class, however remote they may be from the original standard. Arabia, India, and Persia also boast of their epic poets; and the Sultan Mahmood, says Dow, promised Sheik Phirdoci a golden mohur for every verse of an heroic poem, when that divine bard produced the unparalleled poem called the *Schah Numma*, which consisted of sixty thousand couplets. But it did not become me to hold my rushlight to the sunbeaming wisdom of the Right Honourable. "Have you read," continued he, "Milton, Homer, Virgil, Tasso, and Camoens in their original languages?" I replied, that I had most certainly read the poems of those great authors, and many other epic compositions to

boot, though but few of them in their original languages; nor did I conceive that to be at all necessary for the true understanding of epic composition. "Ah, well," said he, "you may have genius certainly, and I have no objection to the taking a copy of your lofty and ambitious muse; but permit me to advise you to call your poem by any other name than that of epic:" [this was given with a smile of unspeakable benevolence] "at the same time, I could not think of allowing my name to be handed about in the list of your subscribers, as a patroniser of such unwarrantable presumption." This advice might certainly have been very wise, and very kind, and very good; but I am so unfortunately pertinacious, as to determine not to follow it, and must abide by the consequences. Let the world,—nay posterity,—though such an appeal, I fear, is greater presumption still,—decide between us.

I have paid a visit to my former friend, the Rev. Mr. R——. I put into his hands three or four books of my epic poem, and stated that having according to his oft-repeated wishes and solicitations, for ever quitted the boards, all my hopes and dependance was on the success of its publication. I entreated him to do me the favour of reading it, and making any corrections he might

deem necessary: but alas, from one so very dilatory, and so much in fear of catching cold that he was obliged carefully to air every page of the MS. by the fire before he could venture to peruse it, it was worse than folly to expect any very extraordinary exertions towards the furtherance and success of my laborious undertaking.

Mr. R—— kept my manuscript by him, till I was quite tired of waiting; and at last returned it, saying that he had exerted himself and got through the first book of twenty-five pages, but could not say whether or no it possessed as much merit as my first poem on the Invasion of Bonaparte. This was not very cheering certainly, from one, too, whom I had been taught to consider as an excellent judge of poetic merit. Yet I still press forward, unaided, unsupported, and unknown. But how exist, you will say. Why not, my friend, quite on air. A legacy of a few pounds left me most opportunely by a female relative, enables us with strict economy to obtain bread; a garden supplies us with vegetables, and these should be quite sufficient to satisfy the wants of a versifying hermit. The proud and envied honours of the world, so much and eagerly sought after, are to me the most trifling vanities;—

" For minds of poets, from their own high sphere
Look down on earth's distinctions, high and low,
Sunken or soaring, as the equal sun
Shed light along the vale and mountain's brow."

I am lost in the grandeur and magnitude of my theme; and amid the silent and unfrequented shades of my embowered cottage, past ages with all their shadowy forms of beauty and martial pomp arise before me. A by-gone world, the relics of which are dust, lives again in the glowing colours of imagination, replete with the betwitching characters of romance, with wonderful adventure and surprising feats of arms; while, over all, the mysterious agency of heaven sheds the real splendour of miraculous machinery. Such a noble theme have I found for my muse in the Old Testament.——But let me proceed with my tale. I must confess, Frank, that to keep out of debt, our comforts are few, and our daily privations many and great; while Maria's delicate health, which sorrow and nervous debility have greatly impaired, renders them the more distressing, and all my future prospects are indeed but dark and dreary.

The Rev. Mr. R—— did me the favour, soon after he returned my manuscript, to recommend me and my productions to one of his clerical

brethren, the Rev. Mr. H—— of B——, possessed, it is said, of great property, extensive influence, and pulpit popularity. I consequently took a journey to B——, and waited on Mr. H. with the first four or five cantos of my manuscript poem. I found him at breakfast; the reception I met with was cold in the extreme: the manners of this preacher of benevolence and goodwill towards mankind, were to me lofty, repulsive, and forbidding. After politely keeping me standing the whole time I was with him, he kindly condescended to take my manuscript, and promised me the honour of a perusal. I waited a long and anxious period for his returning it, which at length he did with a note, stating that he had read the work as far as I had proceeded in it, and that it stood in need of many corrections; therefore his advice, like that of Horace, was to keep it by me some years before I attempted to push it into the world. Such, Frank, was the cold, the chilling advice, without one cheering line of encouragement, one commendatory syllable, or consoling word of kindness or pity to counterbalance its soul-depressing effects which I received from a minister of the humble, the compassionate Jesus, enjoying considerable popularity, extensive influence, and all the blessings

that riches can bestow, fully acquainted with my unhappy situation, and knowing all my hopes depended on the speedy publication of my poem. This counselling, however correct in a literary point of view, was death to me. Never can I forget the dreary evening on which I received his note—In the bitter agony of disappointment, the sad and painful retrospect of the past and despair of the future, friendless and hopeless, I tore it into atoms. I threw myself, by the side of my little boy, who lay unconscious of his father's miseries, slumbering sweetly on the pillow of repose, and bathed his cheeks with scalding tears of anguish. I seemed more than half resolved to rid myself of a wearisome existence, which had been so many tedious years replete with misery and vexation, and desperately rush at once into a world unknown.—

O, my friend, those only who, after years on years of trial, and hope cruelly deferred, have felt misfortune succeed to misfortune, and disappointment continually blasting all their fondly cherished expectations and aims, who have no kind friend at hand to cheer them in the hour of insupportable anguish, who have keenly felt

"The whips and scorns of time,
The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,

The pangs of despised love, the law's delay,
The insolence of office, and the spurns
That patient merit of the unworthy takes,"

those only can tell how dreadful is the struggle when assailed by poverty and despair; when the grave presents its peaceful bosom as the only retreat, the last calm refuge from all their miseries.——At this moment my child awoke, and smiling in my face, clasped his little arms around my neck. This seemed almost too much for nature to support. And could I leave him fatherless and unprotected to that world which had been to me so cruel? No, no, I cried, my sweet, my innocent child, we will not part! Never will I leave thee, never forsake thee! Let what will betide thy wretched father, he will not cowardly shrink from those miseries he was born to endure.—

"Rebus in angustis facile est contemnere vitam;
Fortiter ille facit, qui miseresse potest."

O God, forgive my wild despairings! Thy providence has been hitherto watchful over me in numerous instances; and thy fatherly goodness, though sometimes tempest-hid, is boundless and perpetual as the light of the heavens. Then it was that I felt an impulse rush upon my soul

that seemed more than human; a determined resolution, by God's assistance, to surmount every difficulty by study and perseverance; to endure calmly every privation, and steadily press forward to the completion of my arduous undertaking. I felt, too, a wonderful confidence, which seemed a happy presage, like a splendid sun-gleam beaming o'er the stormy darkness of my wayward destiny, that I should be enabled to finish my work, that it would ultimately be successful and received with favour by the public, and that, however unpropitious and overcast with the blackest clouds the dawning of my literary career might be, the time would arrive when the brightness of prosperity would break from the thick tempest, and, like the crimson rays of the evening, shed a departing glory on the closing scenes of life.

Did you know all, my friend, you would say I have need of superhuman consolation, and a more than common faith with regard to futurity, to bear up firmly against what I at present endure, to enable me to compose under circumstances so trying as mine. Indeed it may be said, that the ink with which I write is often mingled with tears;—for I do not suffer alone. It is the depth of winter, and we are scarcely

able to obtain fuel for firing; so that I am sometimes obliged to write in bed. Yet notwithstanding all this, my dear friend, I am still sanguine enough to believe the time *will* come, when I shall exultingly say with the poet,—

"In my soul,
That nobler field, high wonders manifold
Laboured to light and lustre: for what thought
Unwinged by inbreathed godhead e'er might dream
Of glory to be born from this broad night
Of desolation and deep darkness,—strive
For faint impalpable and airy good
Through the thick clouds of evil and of wo,
Strong, stately, constant, like an eagle set
To drink the last light of the parting sun?"

I am,

With every wish for your prosperity,

SYLVATICUS.

LETTER LXXIV.

L—— Cottage.

DEAR FRIEND,

WHENEVER I see or meet the purse-proud ones of the earth,—and there are not a few in this part of the world,—they always remind me of the poor Indians, who when they happen to have a number of cowrie shells left them by some deceased relation, turn up their noses with sovereign contempt at all their poorer neighbours. So those who chance to possess a few thousand guineas, be they ever so vulgar, ignorant, or sordid, consider themselves as superior beings; and utterly despise all those, whatever may be their talents or merits, who unfortunately have only a very few. But let them pass. I have always a smile of pity for such supercilious beings. The time will soon come, when they will be as much forgotten and unknown as the poor animals that feed in their stalls.

The winter spreads its dark wing for flight, and begins to retreat towards the arctic regions. It has been to me a long and comfortless period;

but it did not freeze up the Castilian fount to which I have had, despite the winds and storms, constant access. 'Tis past, and spring, with its delightful influence, again revisits our clime. I still press forward towards the completion of my great achievement; but an epic poem is not to be written in a day, and, my friend, I have some fresh relics of antiquity which I must talk to you about.

There are along the mouldering cliffs of the ocean, at no great distance from us, most singular remains of some maritime nation or nations, who dwelt on this coast more than two thousand years ago. These relics are discoverable on the edge of the cliffs of Kimmeridge and Worthbarrow, opposite two bays or inlets of the sea, and consist of a fine black mould laid on a bed or pavement of flat stones, on which are marks of a chisel. In this mould are found charcoal, numerous pieces of pottery, (some few specimens being the fragments of fine Samean or Grecian vases), corroded iron, animal bones, sea shells, and what is vulgarly called coal-money. This latter is formed of a brittle and peculiar kind of coal, with which the cliffs of Kimmeridge abound, into round pieces curiously and well turned in a lathe, and marked on the broad surface with

neatly-wrought holes, some square and others round. That the Kimmerians, from whom the ancient Britons were descended, resided at or near the bay of Kimmeridge at some period or other is most certainly evident, from the place retaining their name to this very hour, whilst it is wholly banished from the orthography of almost every other spot in Britain. This of itself is singularly interesting. But as the remains at both these places are most certainly not British, or Roman, or Romanized-British, it seems clear to me that they were Phœnician or Grecian settlements,—perhaps both. Pythias Marseills, an ancient Greek geographer, who lived two hundred years before the Christian era, mentions Britain and the neighbouring isles, and had even visited them. Herodian informs us, lib. iii. c. 47. that the Phœnicians imported hither at first glass beads, salt, little trinkets, earthenware, and toys; and they carried back tin, which they transported as far as India.* There is also every reason to think that they carried from hence lead.† Now as these settlements were on the verge of a vast forest, part of which continued a royal chase

* Diodorus Siculus, lib. v.

† That lead was known to the ancients we find in Exodus, c. xv. v. 10. "They sank as lead in the mighty waters."

down to the time of James I., they may also have traded in furs and skins, Britain being full of wild animals. And may not these curious pieces termed coal-money, which are formed of a material so plentiful on the spot, be some of those very toys made by the ingenious Phœnicians, with which they traded to other nations? For no earthly purpose besides do they seem designed. A piece of the material has been found there, plainly marked, apparently by a compass, with mathematical lines, angles, circles, &c., and this could not have been the work of a barbarous people like the Britons. That the Phœnicians were deeply versed in the arts and sciences, is fully proved in the account given in the Bible of the building of Solomon's temple. All that was beautiful, splendid, noble, and tasteful in architecture, apparel, vessels of gold and silver, glass and toys was called, to denote its excellence, Sidonian; and Abomelus of Tyre, by the subtlety of his questions, put to confusion even the wisdom of Solomon: while long before the war of Troy, Moschus of Sidon taught the doctrine of atoms. Arithmetic and astronomy are said by many to owe their origin to the Phœnicians; and which, no doubt, they taught to the British druids.

At Kimmeridge neither urn nor human interment has yet been discovered: but the remains of the sacrifice of a young bullock were found there lately, placed in a cist surrounded by flat stones; and with it the fragment of a vase, and numerous pieces of coal-money.* A stone bowl of the rudest workmanship, with a part of it broken off, has likewise been dug out of the same spot.

At the other settlement, or colony, of Worthbarrow, after a tempest in which a considerable portion of the cliff fell, a fisherman, who resided near the spot, some years ago discovered a kind of rude coffin or cist, formed with upright flat stones, and covered with the same material, which contained a human skeleton most singularly placed with the skull resting on an urn filled with coal-money. The whole of these highly interesting memorials of other ages and nations he regardlessly hurled into the deep, whose solitary wave, rolling on the shore beneath, and

* Sir Richard Colt Hoare, in a letter inserted in one of the public papers of the day, after visiting and examining this remarkable spot, says, "If I might hazard a conjecture, I should say that these sacrifices (as of old) were made on the departure of vessels from the port to procure a safe and happy voyage." Of the coal-money he adds, "They were as certainly the work of some civilized nation well versed in mechanics; for they are all turned by the lathe, and the ornaments are as sharp as if done by the best workmen of modern days."

the wild cry of the soaring seamew, are all that disturb the deep tranquillity of that once-busy scene of merchandise and traffic. Here was also taken from the cliffs a large stone with a hollow hewn out of it, forming a complete rock-bason. It is plainly manifest, from the various remains, that both Kimmeridge and Worthbarrow have been the settlements, resorts, and marts of both civilized and barbarous nations.

At Worthbarrow there has likewise been found a small urn well baked and containing ashes, on the top of which were two small bones placed in the form of a Roman X, in one angle of which was a piece of the coal-money, and on the coal-money a brass coin, but whether Phœnician or not, cannot be determined. Another large urn was likewise dug up, the lower part of which is in my possession; it was handsomely ornamented with the lozenge and chevron, but certainly not British. This, too, was full of ashes, and on the top were placed the jaw-bones of two sheep, they being, though right and left, of a different size. The top of this urn was covered with a piece of the coal material. Here have also been found a stone *patera* with numerous bones of animals and birds, as I have before stated; and very near the same cliff, is a tumulus.

To the south of the bay is a lofty natural barrow, toot, or hill, whose precipices of stone and gypsum jut far out into the bosom of the turbulent breakers. This was most assuredly the hill of burnt-offerings, the high-place of Phœnician sacrifice. Here have been exhumed numerous half-burnt bones of various animals, and the horns of oxen. At the begining of the ascent to this wave-worn promontory, are still to be seen a rampart and ditch; and higher up in the centre of the acclivity, is a fine bold horn-work or bastion, which guarded the only approach to the sacred hill of worship. Towards the summit are several hollows, over which the booths and tents of the priests were, no doubt, erected.

Hither to this surge-laved mountain repaired the Sidonian mariners to offer sacrifices to their god Chrysor, who first launched the venturous prow on the mighty waters, and whose worship was constantly established wherever they had colonies. How often have the victim-consuming flames ascended from this holy mountain on the evening air, reflected, like the fiery streams that gush from the volcano's top, in the softly-murmuring waters that reposed in stillness amid the deep concavity of the bay below; where rode at anchor the Phœnician *gauli* and *triremes*, or long

galleys, loaded with the gems of the east, the purple of Tyre, the glass of Sidon, the perfumes of Arabia, the gold of Saba and Ophir, the ivory of Afric, the tin of the Cassiterides, the furs of Durotrigia, the coal-toys of Kimmeridge, and the pearls of Britain. The song of the chief mariners, who were princes of the ocean, rose on the evening winds from the hill-top, as they stood around the blazing altar, to the Dii Pataici, tutelary gods of their vessels, and all the deities of the earth-encircling deep. The strains, as they rolled over the waters wildly sweet, were swelled into a full and solemn chorus by the united voices of the seafaring crowds, who thronged the vessels as they lifted their sails to the favouring breeze, and stood ready to raise their anchors, bound for the distant ports of Gaul, the coast of Punic, the isles of Elisha, the banks of the Nile, the shores of Canaan, and the tempest darkened billows of the Cimmerian sea.* Deep and loud was the song that pealed along the hollow cliffs of Flowersbarrow, and died in music around the surge-beat rocks of Muope.

How melancholy to stand on the verge of those precipices, which are daily mouldering, and will

* The Black Sea, called by Herodotus and Orosius *Mare Cimmerium*, which was visited by the Phœnicians.

continue to moulder till not a wreck of antiquity remains, when the orb of day, which once saw that mart crowded with the sons of commerce, and the bay filled with the barks of merchandise, goes down in brightless over the hills of Bindon. The hollow voice of the ocean, that seems to utter a wailing for the fate of nations, is then the only sound that meets the ear; all besides is silence and dimness, save when the hill of sacrifice is again illuminated with the signal-fires of the smuggler, to warn the outlawed vessel from the coast. O, then how doth its ruddy flame awaken the remembrance of ages and of kindred, tongues and people gone down to that "undiscovered country, from whose bourne no traveller returns!"

Knowing your opinions respecting the detested Slave-Trade, which has been so long a disgrace to the Christian name, I send you the following lines,

and remain,

Yours in sincerity,

SYLVATICUS.

AROZAMBA,

OR THE SLAVE-SHIP.

THE waves are loud, the wild winds high,
And the ocean flouts the tempest-sky;
The slave-ship rides the billowy swell,
And steers for the land of the setting sun,
The groan, and the sigh, and the last farewell,
Through the dark floating-prison run;
While the storm-bird sits high on the shrouds
Shrieking amid the thunder-clouds,
And the shark below cuts the rolling flood,
Hungry and eager for human blood!
"Adieu, thou land of my home, adieu!
No more shall I loved Afric view!
Thou land of ivory, gums, and gold,
Scourged by the inroads of the white man bold
Far on the ocean's distant brim
Fast art thou fading from my sight!
O, one look more!— Thy outline dim
Now mingles with the falling night:—
O, one breath more of the balmy air,
Ere I die in yon dungeon of black despair!—
White man, forbear the whip!—I go
Among my brethren chained below!"
Sighed Arozamba, once a chieftain proud,
Now pent amid the suffocating crowd
Of wretched slaves, raging with agony
Of thirst and bloody stripes. His burning eye

Glanced like the dogstar's beam: hope shone not there,
Its flash was the stormy lightning of despair.
"Roll mountains high, thou troubled sea,
And bury us deep in thy immensity!
Ye awful spirits of the flame-wreathed cloud,
Utter your thundereous voices yet more loud!
Ye death-fires that illume the ocean dark,
Burn, cinder burn this fiend-steered bark!
Then will the tempest-haunted deep assuage
Of horrid thirst our fierce tormenting rage;
Then shall I from the wave arise again,
Happy and free from the tyrant whiteman's chain;
Then on the rose-cloud of the early day,
Fleet as the young sunbeam, shall I mount away
To the land of my home, to its woods and its groves,
Where the elephant haunts and the buffalo roves:
O, then on my chariot of clouds I shall sail
To the mountains of Kong, whose summits repose
Far, far above the stormy gale,
Bathing in liquid gold and rose,
When suns o'er the encrimsoned heaven
Arise in pomp, or set at even!
There with the spirits of my sires,
Mid thronging glories, radiant fires,
That shoot and stream athwart the sky
In rainbow-hued resplendency,
Above the vulture's loftiest soar,
I shall listen to the mountain cataract's roar;
And the voice of the lion in search of his prey,

As he shakes from his mane the silver moon-ray;
And the river-horse slumbering awakes from his dream,
Where his huge limbs he stretches in the lotus-clad
stream:
Then again I shall listen to the gay evening song
That steals the sweet rota-tree bowers* among;
And where with its blossoms of bright golden hue
The gum-tree flings its fragrance to the soft midnight dew;
And the rich orange-flower and the pine-apple yield
Their odours to scent the palm-shadowed field;
Yes, there I shall hear the sweet ballafoo,
The drum, and the harp's silver wires,
The Indian maid's song, and the wild halloo
Of dancers around their bright fires.
There my Falemè I shall meet,
Torn from my arms by the curst slatee.†—
What rapturous bliss my love to greet!
To kiss her cheek, what ecstasy!
Then I'll bear her to some mountain bower,
Far from the hated whiteman's power;
Where the beautiful tali-tree flourishes fair,
And the bloom of the citron embalms the fresh air;
Where the pawpaw, banana, and orange-trees shed
A sweet cooling shade o'er the moss fountain's head;
Where the broad-leaved cobai its delicious fruit yields,
And wild-vines and pine-apples cover the fields;

* "The flowers of the rota shed a perfume as delicious as the rose."—*Mollien.*

† A slave dealer.

With the sweet lotus-berry* and crimson tiekè†
And honey rich dropping from the mangrove-tree!
Then I'll wander in freedom amid the green lawns,
Where the zebus, and the springbok repose with her
fawns;
I shall fearlessly roam the vast desert of sand
On the wings of the sirocco; and visit the land
Of Bam[illegible], where the soil with gold-dust teems,
And flow o'er gems and yellow sands the streams!
Enchanted land!—the fell Mandingoe's home
Guarded by spirits,—where doth never come
The cruel whiteman! Thence I'll wing my way,
Like the strong eagle to her evening prey,
To the hidden sources of our floods,
Embosomed deep in sacred woods;
Where the axe was never heard,
Nor the slatee e'er hath dared
To imprint his cursed foot,
By the baobab's‡ sacred root,

* "The lotus is common in all Negro kingdoms, and is found on the Gambia; but it is in the sandy soil of Kaarta Ludamar, and in the northern districts of Bambara that it is most abundant. There the natives collect the small farinaceous berries, which are of a yellow colour and delicious taste, and by drying them in the sun, pounding them in a mortar, and forming them into a paste with water, compose a sort of bread which resembles the sweetest gingerbread in colour and flavour.....The lotus-shrub is found at Tunis, and seems evidently to be the plant which nourished the Libyan Lotophagi of Homer and Pliny."—*Park's First Journal.*

† The Sone produces the tiekè fruit, like a cherry in colour and in taste like a mulberry.

‡ The monarch of African trees.—See *Mollien's Travels in the Interior of Africa*

That towers aloft into the sky
In matchless, verdant majesty,
On which the pelican builds her nest;
While in its boughs the purple dove doth rest,
And with the guardian spirits dwelling there*
Melodious converse holds,—charming the air
With music sweet as the sunset hymn
Of the caravan heard in the desert dim!
There the sigarras wildly sing,
And humming-birds their murmuring †
Blend with the song of a thousand bees,
Mid the baobab's leaf-shaded cavities!
There with those spirits of sun-dazzling limb,
I shall play on the moonlighted fountain's brim;
And dance to the tuneful water's rush
As from their lilied‡ source they gush,
Eager, like youthful travellers, to roam
Through distant regions far from home;
Then speed my way o'er seas and isles
To where eternal summer smiles!—
The winds and seas roar round this bark,
Like the hungry lion in the forest dark
Frighting the trembling caravan.—
Howl louder yet!—strike, lightning, yon white clan!—
A yell that drowns the groan of the African

* The sources of the African rivers are supposed to be guarded by spirits.

† "Humming-birds of various colours sport round the hut of the negro."—*Mollien.*

‡ "Water-lilies of a dazzling white were on the surface of a brook."—*Ibid.*

Rings through the ship !—She mounts the steep
Rough surge, a hideous globe of fire !
No more, ye sable daughters, weep,
It is the tyrant whiteman's pyre !
Revenge is ours ! that lightning-stroke*
Slavery's detested chain hath broke !
Mid thunders, storms, and winds that rend the sky,
She, [illegible]sing, smoking, now is hurled on high,
A horrid beacon flaming through the gloom ;
And now sinks in the red wave's yawning tomb !
Freedom and glory !—Ended are our woes !—
Shout ! shout ! my loved companions,—down she goes !"

* "The Brazilian Slave-ship *Invincible*, after a wretched passage of fifty-six days reached this port, having during the period been twice struck with lightning,—on the 1st of January at four in the morning, which shivered to pieces the mizen-topmast, and did other damages, killing one marine on deck and two slaves below ; and secondly at noon, in a heavy squall, on the 30th of January, which carried away the main-mast to the deck, and kill[illegible] slaves in the hold,—a man and boy. The mortality on board this vessel on the way up, we believe, has never been exceeded. Out of the 440 unfortunate Africans on board at the time of capture, 178 died, in addition to the 4 killed and 4 missing, supposed to have jumped overboard in one of the storms of thunder and lightning."—From a *Sierra Leone Paper* of 1827.

LETTER LXXV.

L—— Cottage.

DEAR FRANK,

THIS is Easter-Sunday. On this day, in the year 1341, Francesco Petrarcha was solemnly crowned with the poetic diadem of immortal laurel, and all the rites and ceremonials of ancient custom, amid the applause of shouting thousands and the congratulations of the noble and the learned, in the Capitol at Rome. O, how enviable such a proud distinction! Glorious crown and reward of virtuous emulation and literary achievement, soul-cheering guerdon of talent and triumphant merit, O how unlike the blood-stained wreaths of the desolating conqueror! Happy, happy country, that thus vauntingly distinguishes her sons of genius:—delightful and truly classic clime, the seat of the Muses, the cradle and nurse of Painting, and the temple of Music: where all the sister arts are cherished with tenderest care, and, crowned while yet in life, with that honour and distinction which become the gifted heirs of a guiltless immortality.

But to return to my own age and nation. You then, Frank, are determined, I find, to employ those abilities which Heaven has granted you in a public manner. You have, I well know, from boyhood possessed a talent and taste for drawing, and now you have commenced as an artist in the great metropolis. My prayers are with you: but you know you have never held out very encouraging hopes to me, nor can I in return honestly congratulate you on the path which you have chosen. You possess, I believe, the higher qualifications of the noble art. You have great industry, the patience of research, a warm and lively imagination, with a soul fully alive to all those delightful impressions which the beautiful and the sublime in nature and science can inspire. Taste, feeling, sentiment, judgment, and genius are yours; and you have taken no small pains to cultivate and improve those noble faculties with which God has endowed you. May you, with a high relish for the epic achievements of your heaven-taught art, equal and even unite in your historic compositions, the tone and colouring of Ludovico Carracci, the grandeur and sublimity of M. Angelo, the harmony and brilliance of Titian, and the truth of Raphael! May you be the founder of a new school of beauty and sub-

limity; and remember the words which Il Tintoretto, whom Titian through jealousy excluded from his house ten days after his admission, wrote on the walls of his study:—"*Il disegno di Michael Angelo, e il colorito di Tiziano.*" But I tremble for you, when I consider the difficulties you have to encounter. Even to delineate a good outline, the first simple though most useful principle in your art, if you would obtain accuracy and striking expression, requires continual study and practice. Then to bid the canvass glow with historic tales of other ages, to paint manners, customs, passions, and high heroic deeds of kings, and saints, and gods, that shall silently speak to the heart with irresistible force and truth, winning in reply the ready acclamations of wonder, applause, and delight from every beholder, how pleasing,—but ah, how difficult! And should you, even after all you have done, and ten thousand times more that you must yet perform, reach to a high degree of perfection, what is your reward? Why to gratify English taste, generosity, and tender feeling, you have only one thing more to do,—and that is to die in indigence, obscurity, and misery;—for who would put up the picture of a living English artist in their galleries?

Alas! in painting your picture, I have but too forcibly drawn my own. Where shall we look for consolation? I believe I have never told you, that besides my epic poem, I have been writing a Tragedy founded on a Saxon tale, which I sent some weeks ago to the Haymarket Theatre. I yesterday received the following letter:—

Theatre-Royal, Haymarket.

"Sir,

The Tragedy called *Ethelred the Usurper* has been read with the greatest attention, and the Proprietors beg leave to thank you for the offer of that piece, but are of opinion it would not succeed in representation. The piece may be had on application at the Theatre next week.

I am, Sir,
Your obedient Servant,
J. WINSTON.

This rejection is sufficiently mortifying and disheartening: but courage, my friend, my brother; let us continue to press forward in spite of every opposition. We are both running a race; the goal of glory and renown is before us; let us, then, so run, that we may obtain at least the envied prize of immortality. I will endeavour, under all my privations and miseries, to draw consolation from the following

passage of Johnson, when speaking of a poet:— "He must content himself with the slow progress of his name; contemn the applause of his own time, and commit his claims to the justice of posterity. He must write as the interpreter of nature, and the legislator of mankind; and consider himself as presiding over the thoughts and manners of future generations; as a being superior to time and place."

Having lately viewed the insect tribes which inhabit the splendid bowers of a plant in full bloom, I send you the following lines written on the surprising and interesting sight; and

In the bond of brotherly kindness,
I am, yours,
SYLVATICUS.

THE ADDRESS
OF THE FLOWER-EPHEMERAL TO MAN.

THOU moving world of dreadful majesty!
Thou man! of vast dimensions that extend
Beyond our vision's utmost stretch of sight,
And powers incomprehensible to us;
Who oft beneath thy feet our beauteous globe
Dost crush, as heedless in thy thundering march
As th' earthquake that o'erwhelms thy proudest towers;
Or gather'st it, with all the numerous tribes

And nations that upon its surface dwell,
T' adorn thy monstrous bosom. God-like being!
Thou little dream'st of what a fairy land
We dwell in, where delights to thy gross sight
Invisible abound, and paradise
Blooms in unfading glory.* Thou canst crush
Ten thousand insect-worlds with all their hosts
Of beautiful inhabitants, and liv'st
A thousand ages of ephemeral life
In undeclining youth:—yet art thou doomed,
With all thy might of power, dominion, pride,
And vastity of form immeasurable,
To toil, and care, and sorrow. Lofty man!
With all thy proud distinctions, bow to us.
We know nor care, nor sorrow, want nor toil.
Look through thy glass, and view our happy clime
That far exceeds the Eden thou hast lost!
Fields of perpetual green, o'er which we stray
In boundless wanderings, are for us outspread,
Adorned with woods, and flowers, and bloomy gold.
Beneath o'erhanging groves, that tower on high,
Where tulip-flowers and bright geranium tints
Mingle with redolent profusion, we
In love's delights sport the glad hours away,
On beds of rose and lily-buds reclined,
While summer dwells for ever in our bowers.

* "It is credible then, from analogy, that there are animals feeding on the leaves of plants like the cattle in our meadows and on our mountains, which repose under the shade of a dowf imperceptible to the naked eye, and which from goblets formed like so many suns quaff nectar of the colour of gold and silver."—*St. Pierre's Studies of Nature.*

What pains are thine to gain a scanty fare
How often the descending tempests blast
Thy vintage, and thy harvests sweep away,
To famishment a sad prey leaving thee!
Not so with us: we are arrayed in tints
That put to shame the gorgeous flowing robes
Of bridal kings: yet we nor spin, nor sow,
Nor reap the scanty harvest. Still for us,
On tables of resplendent topaz spread,
Delicious manna and ambrosial fruits
Supply uncalled for a perpetual feast:
While goblets that outshine thy sun, self-filled,
With richest liquors wait our thirst to quench,
In shades where every tree bears gem-like flowers,
And golden fountains gush forth honey-floods.

What are thy princely palaces to those
In which we dwell, and sport, and banquet gay,
Built for our pleasure without toil or cost?
Pavilions of the richest dies are ours,
To which thy finest silks are coarsely vile,
Studded with beamy gems, and radiant pearls,
And starry wreaths of diamond-flashing light.
Our palaces, self-raised, on pillars stand
Of ivory transparent, roofed with gold,
And emerald, and ruby. Domes sublime
Of blazing carbuncle and sapphire bright,—
To which thy proudest temples, when adorned
In all their sculptured imagery and pomp
Of picturings mosaic, are but rude

Misshapen worlds of dust and rugged stone,—
Outstretch above our heads in magnitude
And flaming grandeur, that surpass thy heaven
When lighted with the radiance of the sun
As he departs in glory. Splendid urns
And flagons of amethyst there pour untouched *
Mellifluous nectar and the ruby wine
In opal vase and amber-gleaming cup,
Inviting us to quaff as we recline
On beds of silver strewed with living flowers,
Whose bloom and scent our longest life survive.
There we repose, lulled by melodious sounds
Of waters, that o'er rocks of onyx roll
And precipices of refulgent gold,
With chrysolite and hyacinthine spar
Crusted in prodigal magnificence,
Forming a thousand beautiful cascades
Of liquid pearl bright gleaming from afar
Betwixt the drooping boughs of waving trees,
With blossom-gems and rose-died fruitage showered.
Upward, enshrined in crystal columns, play—
Those columns which support our beauteous world,—
A thousand sparkling fountains, whose pure streams
On every side, with sunbow-coloured rays,
Diverge along our valleys and soft plains,
And water every grove. And oft is seen

* "I do not speak thus from conjecture: for having examined one day by the microscope the flowers of thyme, I distinguished with equal surprise and delight, superb flagons, with a long neck, of a substance resembling amethyst, from the gullets of which seemed to flow ingots of liquid gold."—*St. Pierre.*

Bright oceans, hanging like thy mid-day sun,
Emitting brilliant light and dazzling dies,
And peopled with their myriads, on the heights
And Alpine regions of our verdant world.
These watery globes, unlike thy level main,
Ascend in air and floating seas become;
Till they with radiance, like thy morn, expand
Into a thousand clouds of rosy light.*

Vain, boastful man! thou liv'st thy appointed time
In toil and sweat, in agony and tears:
Our youth and age are but thy summer's day!
Yet 'tis with us a period long as thine:
A period bright as Eden in its prime
Of blessedness: a festive joyous round,
Unstained with crime or sorrow, want or pain;
Splendid as brief: unlike thy wintry day,
Overcast with clouds and tempests, which appears
At its dark close of anguish, short as ours!

* "The beings which live under a reflext thus enriched, must have ideas very different from ours of light, and of the other phenomena of nature. A drop of dew filtering in the capillary and transparent tubes of a plant, presents to them thousands of cascades; the same drop, fixt as a wave on the extremity of one of its prickles, an ocean without a shore; evaporated into air, a vast aerial sea. They must therefore see fluids ascending instead of falling; assuming a globular form instead of sinking to a level; and mounting into the air instead of obeying the laws of gravity."—*St. Pierre.*

END OF VOL. II.

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